CAT'S CRADLE

THE GOLDEN TWINE

JO RIOUX

CAT'S CRADLE

THE GOLDEN TWINE

CAT'S CRADLE

THE GOLDEN TWINE

JO RIOUX

:01
First Second
NEW YORK

TO KEITH,
FOR ALWAYS BELIEVING IN ME

MEOW

OKAY, IGOR. OUT YOU GO.

HOLD IT!

DID YOU LOCK UP THE CHICKEN COOP?

NO...BUT I CLOSED THE DOOR!

GO PUT THE LOCK ON, OR THE CAT WILL GET IN THERE.

GROAN

GO!

OKAY, OKAY.

WHAT DOES SHE THINK, IGOR? THAT YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO OPEN A DOOR?

MAMA GIVES YOU FAR TOO MUCH CRED—

HEY!

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

MA! THERE'S SOMEONE IN THE—

WHA—?

MRAARRRW

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THERE'S A MONSTER!
IT WAS A CAITSITH! A CAITSITH!

SKRRI\\\\\\\TCH

THIS IS OUR VALLEY, GALATEA.

SKRTCH

SURN, WHERE WE ARE, IS IN THE SOUTH. ABOVE IT IS THE FOREST OF DAMAGY AND THE STEPPES OF BOREA.

AND HERE IS THE GIANT'S BELT, THE MOUNTAIN CHAIN THAT SURROUNDS THE VALLEY—AND ***PROTECTS*** IT.

BECAUSE BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS, RIGHT WHERE YOU'RE SITTING...

...IS THE LAND OF MONSTERS!

THERE MONSTERS WERE BORN, AND THERE THEY MIGHT HAVE REMAINED.

BUT FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO...

SKRITCH

...THE GIANT'S BELT WAS SPLIT BY THE SPIDER WITCH.

EVER SINCE THEN, EVIL MONSTERS HAVE BEEN COMING THROUGH THAT GAP.

THAT'S WHY WE CALL IT THE "MONSTER'S CRADLE."

ARE ALL MONSTERS EVIL?

YES, OF COURSE!

EXCEPT FOR THE GIANTS. THEY ROAM THE MOUNTAINS NEAR THE MONSTER'S CRADLE, TRYING TO KEEP THE OTHER MONSTERS OUT.

BUT THIS STORY IS ABOUT A MONSTER THAT MANAGED TO GET IN.

"THE WALKING HEAD."
ON A LONELY WINTER NIGHT, MANY YEARS AGO, AN OLD MAN WAS WALKING BACK TO HIS CABIN IN THE WOODS.

HE HAD ALMOST REACHED THE DOOR WHEN HE HEARD A VOICE THAT SAID—

STOP!

I ALREADY KNOW THAT ONE. TELL US ANOTHER.

HMF!

OKAY, HOW ABOUT "THE HOWLING GHOST." IT'S ABOUT—

NO, I'VE HEARD THAT ONE, TOO!

I'M NOT PAYING FIVE RONETS FOR THIS!

5 € MONSTER STORIES

WELL, NO ONE'S KEEPING YOU!

LOOK, I JUST WANT A NEW STORY. A ***REAL*** ONE. LIKE THE ONE I HEARD ABOUT THE CAITSITH.

WHAT STORY?

IT WAS ON A FARM IN THE NEXT VILLAGE. THIS KID WENT OUT AT NIGHT TO CHECK THE CHICKEN COOP, RIGHT?

AND WHEN HE GOT THERE, THIS CAITSITH POUNCED ON HIM AND MAULED HIM HALF TO DEATH!

THAT'S A REAL STORY. ARE YOU EVEN A REAL MONSTER TAMER?

OF COURSE I AM! SORT OF...ALMOST... MAYBE I'M MORE OF A MONSTER TAMER IN TRAINING.

BUT THESE STORIES ARE REAL. THIS BOOK CONTAINS EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT MONSTERS.

PFF! I BET I KNOW MORE ABOUT MONSTERS THAN YOU DO.

OH, REALLY?

SO YOU KNOW HOW A CAITSITH CAN TURN INTO A HUMAN, RIGHT?

OF COURSE! EVERYBODY KNOWS *THAT.*

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AND DO YOU KNOW HOW TO TELL A CAITSITH FROM A REAL PERSON?

UH...

THEIR TAILS. CAITSITHS CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING EXCEPT THEIR TAILS.

GUESS YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT.

PFF. I'M DONE. LET'S GO.

SLAP

YOU WANT A ***REAL*** MONSTER STORY? THEN LISTEN UP.

ONE EVENING NOT LONG AGO, A TRAVELING MERCHANT CAMP WAS CLOSING UP FOR THE NIGHT. AS THEY WERE SHUTTING THE GATE, THEY GOT ONE LAST VISITOR.

IT WAS A WAGON... THAT MOVED BY ITSELF!

BY ITSELF?

IT GLIDED SILENTLY PAST THE GATES, THEN STOPPED. A STRANGE LITTLE MAN CAME OUT—A MAN WITH A COLD, DEAD HEART. WITH EVERY STEP HE TOOK, HIS HEART RANG INSIDE HIS HOLLOW CHEST: ***CLANG, CLANG, CLANG.***

HE ASKED TO SPEAK TO THE LEADER OF THE CAMP. BUT THE LEADER WAS SCARED! HE ASKED HIM TO LEAVE AT ONCE! THE LITTLE MAN SAID HE HAD SOMETHING TO SELL, THOUGH. SO THE LEADER OF THE CAMP LOOKED INSIDE THE WAGON... AND HE ***SCREAMED.*** BECAUSE WHAT THE LITTLE MAN WAS SELLING...

...WAS A GIGANTIC MONSTER!

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HOW BIG? BIGGER THAN A CAITSITH?

MUCH BIGGER! ITS EYES BURNED LIKE EMBERS, AND ITS BLOOD-CURDLING WAILS COULD BE HEARD THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT: *HOOOO HOOOOO.*

SO HOW DOES THE STORY END?

IT DOESN'T. THE MONSTER'S STILL HERE, IN THIS CAMP!

WHAT?!

NO WAY!

FOLLOW ME.

THERE!

SO IT'S A WAGON. WHAT DOES THAT PR—

CLANG

CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG

SO THERE'S REALLY A MONSTER IN THERE?

YES.

AND FOR AN EXTRA FIVE RONETS, I'LL GO TAME IT!

PFF! COME ON.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

FIRST, YOU'RE A GIRL. SECOND, UM...

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...YOU'RE SHORT.

SO WHAT, HEDGEHOG?!

SO YOU'RE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO TAME A MONSTER.

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT STRENGTH! YOU HAVE TO BE AGILE, AND CUNNING, AND...AND YOU HAVE TO *THINK* LIKE A MONSTER!

YEAH? AND WHAT MAKES YOU SO SPECIAL?

BECAUSE... I WAS BORN OVER THE MOUNTAINS.

IN THE LAND OF MONSTERS?

NO WAY!

YES.

AND I WAS BROUGHT TO THIS VALLEY IN THE ARMS OF A FIRE-BREATHING DRAGON.

OKAY...

IF YOU CAN PUT YOUR HAND BETWEEN THE BARS, WE'LL GIVE YOU A **CROWN** EACH.

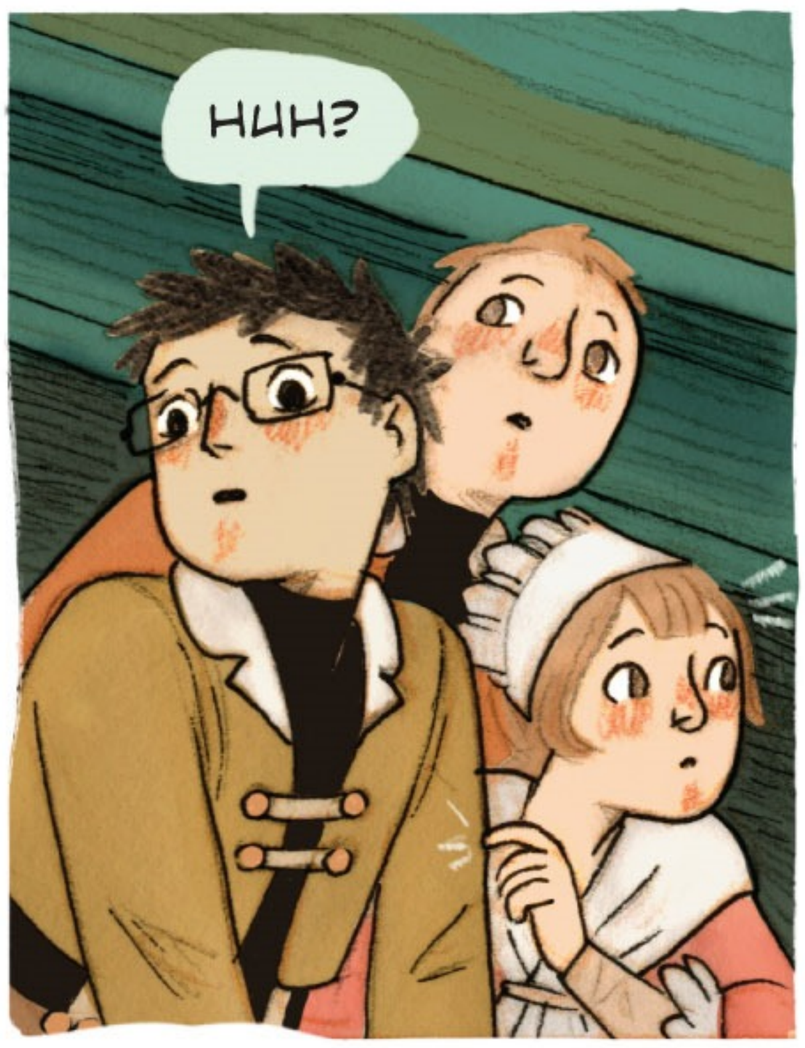
DEAL!

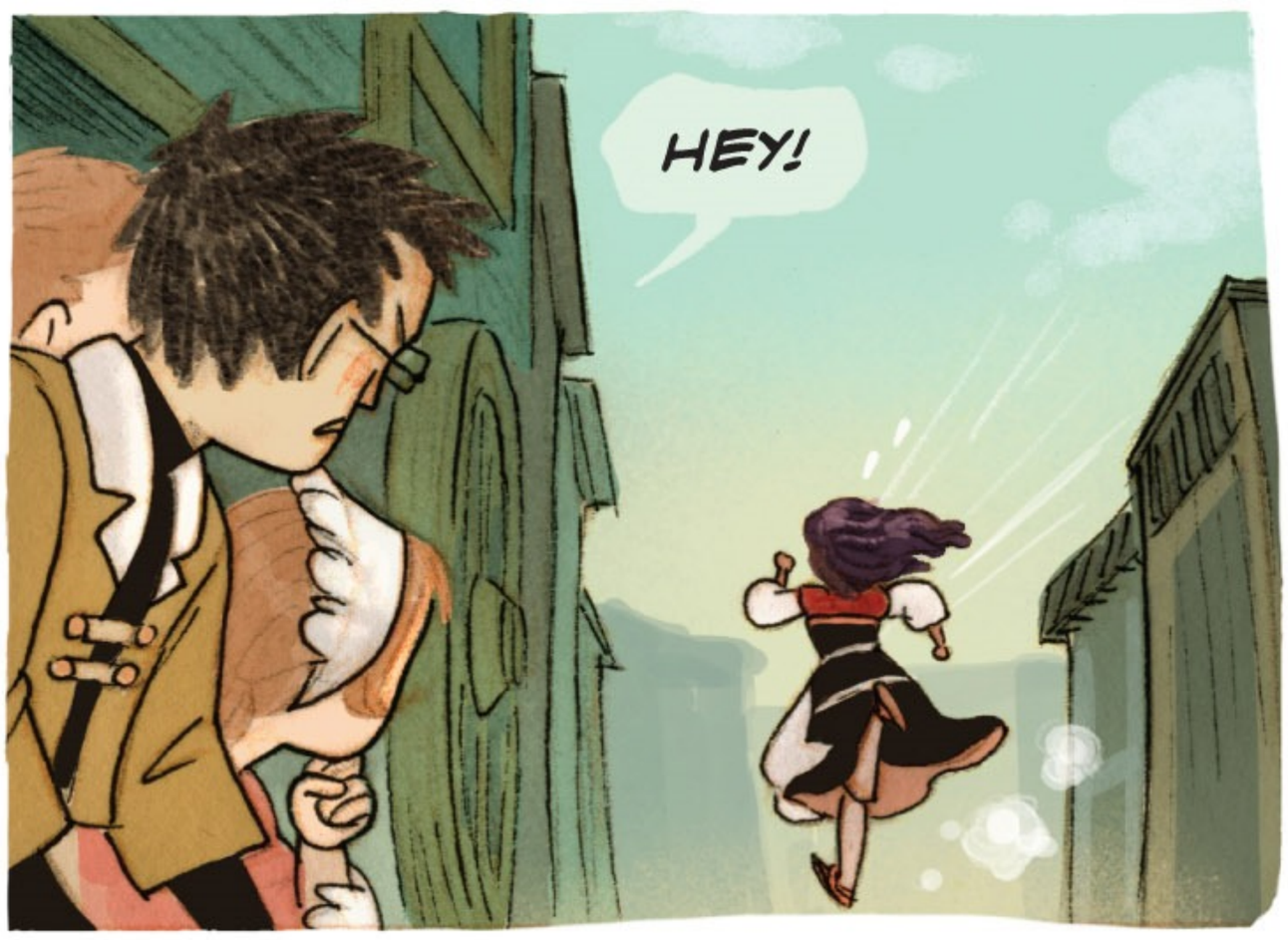
SLAP

UH, I DON'T THINK I HAVE THAT MUCH!

I'LL LEND IT TO YOU.

STEP





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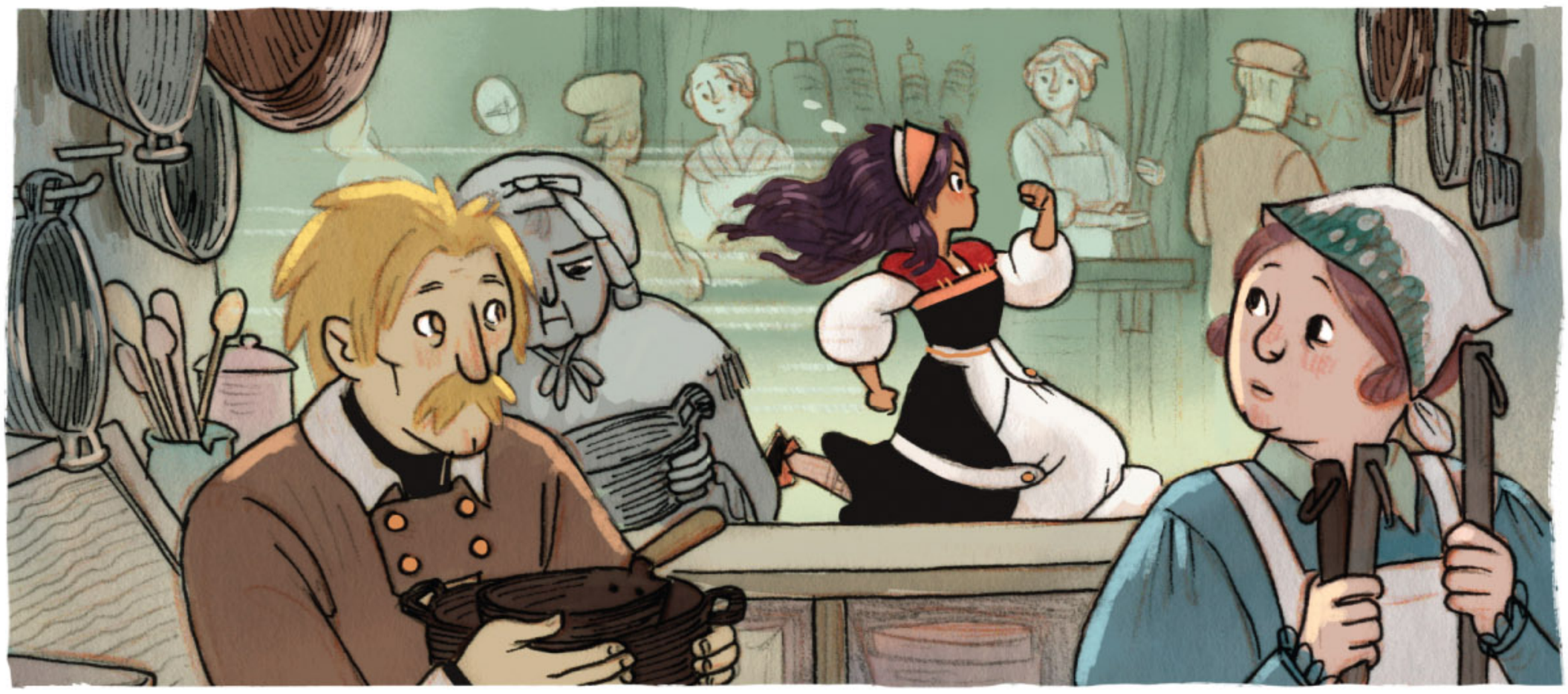
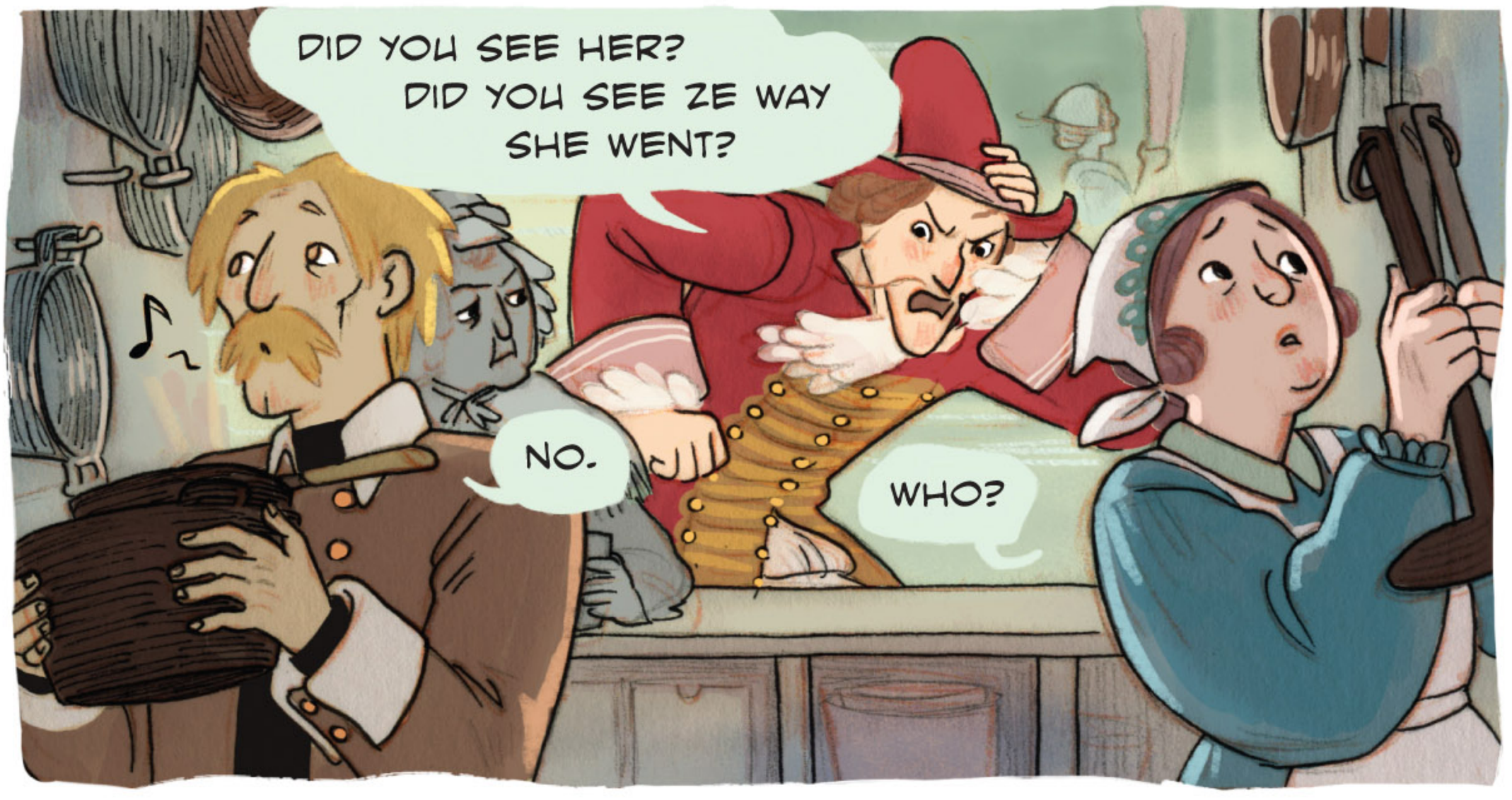
I TOLD YOU TO GET OUT OF MY CAMP!




DID YOU SEE HER?
DID YOU SEE ZE WAY SHE WENT?
NO.
WHO?

CEDRIC! DID SHE COME BY HERE?

WHO?

ZE MOUSE! SHE IS STILL HERE!

SURI? NO, REALLY?

YES! YOU SAID WE LOST HER IN ZE LAST TOWN!

BUT SHE IS STILL ***HERE!***

CALM DOWN, LEON.

AM I NOT ZE LEADER OF ZIS CAMP?

HAVE I NOT ***TRIED*** TO MAKE IT A RESPECTABLE ESTABLISHMENT?

MUST I LET SOME UNGRATEFUL LITTLE FOUNDLING TURN IT INTO A FARCE, A JOKE, A ***CIRCUS?!***

CALM DOWN! CALM DOWN!

I AM CALM.

GOOD, GOOD.

AND...

...YOU'RE SURE IT WAS HER?

CEDRIC, SOMETIMES I ZINK YOU ARE ALL TRYING TO DRIVE ME MAD.

OF COURSE NOT. IT'S JUST YOU'VE BEEN SO NERVOUS LATELY.

DON'T REMIND ME! TOMORROW IS ZE BIGGEST SALE OF MY LIFE!

I'LL BE DEALING WIZ A *PRINCE!* I WANT IT TO BE PERFECT! SPLENDID! WONDERFUL!

OH, I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.

AFTER ALL...

...WE HAVE HIS MONSTER.

PHEW!

I KNEW IT!

YOU'RE NO MONSTER TAMER. YOU GOT SCARED AND RAN AWAY.

I DIDN'T RUN AWAY! I JUST, UH...FORGOT MY TAMING WAND!

COME ON. LET'S GO BACK.

HooOooo

!!

AhoOOOooooOooO

UH, MAYBE THE CHANT TO TAME A GORGORUS.

"MONSTER, MONSTER, BEAST OF DREAD, BOW YOUR HEAD—"

"AND KNOW YOUR MASTER!"

RRRRR!

ULP! LET'S SKIP AHEAD!

"WITH THIS WAND I VANQUISH—"

POKE POKE

CRUNCH

CRUNCH CRUNCH GULP

RRRRR!

HRRRRR!

UM, MAYBE WE GOT OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT! I MEAN, NOT ALL MONSTERS ARE EVIL, R-RIGHT?

MAYBE YOU'RE JUST SCARED OR UPSET OR...

...MAYBE YOU'RE JUST SAD BECAUSE YOU'RE A LONG WAY FROM HOME.

HOOOOO

IS THAT IT? ARE YOU FEELING LONELY?

AWOOOOO

ME, TOO.

PAT

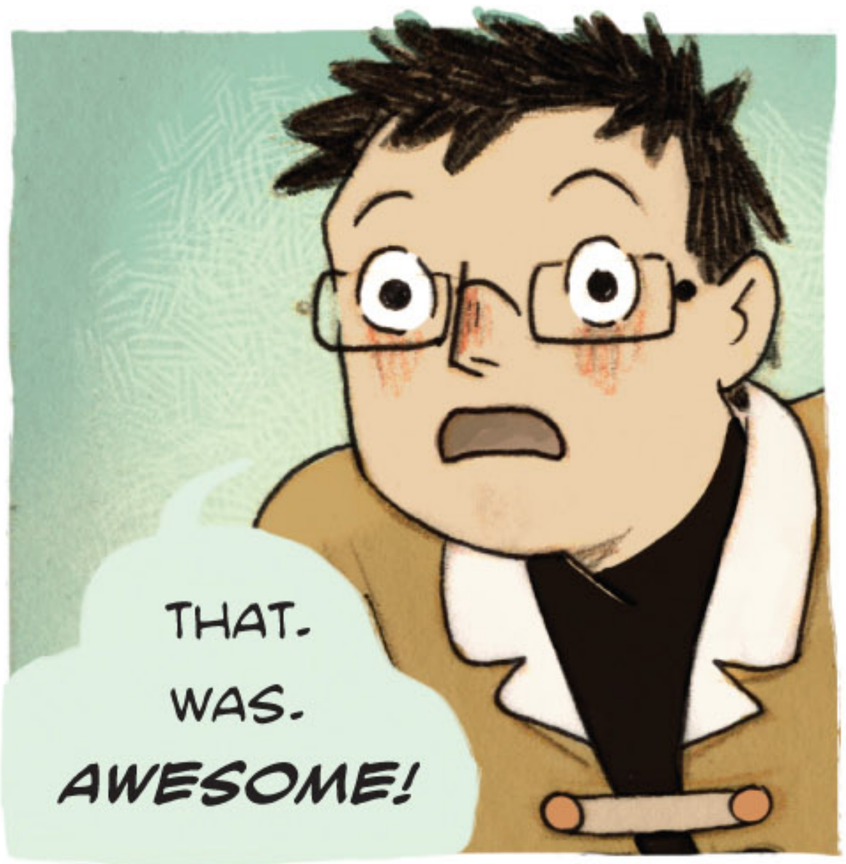
AWOOooOOOO

I DID IT.

IT'S OKAY! COME IN!

ROOo?

AwwoOOOoooOooooOOo!


THAT.
WAS.
AWESOME!

THAT WAS SO AWESOME!
DID YOU SEE THAT?!
IT WAS HUGE!

LATER THAT DAY...

MARLENA, I HAVE BAD NEWS. ZE MOUSE IS STILL WIZ US.

NO. REALLY?

YES, SO I MADE A LIST OF PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE.

LET ME WALK YOU ZROUGH ZE FIRST TWENTY.

NUMBER ONE—

LEON, I'M VERY BUSY RIGHT NOW. COULD THIS WAIT AT ALL?

DO NOT WORRY!

I MADE COPIES FOR EVERYONE.

TAKE HEART! WE WILL GET HER ONE DAY!

SIGH

HI, MARLENA! CAN I HAVE A CHERRY DOUGHNUT?

SORRY, SURI. NO FREEBIES TODAY. NO MONEY, NO DOUGHNUT.

NO PROBLEM!

PLINK

AH, SO IT WAS A GOOD DAY?

YUP!

GUESS WHAT I DID TODAY!

YOU SAW HOW BUSY WE WERE AND DECIDED TO COME BACK TO WORK AT THE BAKERY?

UH, WELL, NO...

THEN IT'LL HAVE TO WAIT.

HI, ANNA! HI, MIKLAS!

YOU'RE BOTH HARD AT WORK, I SEE!

WE ARE!

WE'RE JUST WAITING FOR A GOOD ONE.

YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHAT I DID TODAY!

YOU KNOW THAT BIG WAGON—

TWO DOZEN BLUEBERRY DOUGHNUTS.

WHOOSH

MA'AM! LET ME HELP YOU!

NO, ME! ME!

I CAN DO IT!

clutch

MAY I HELP YOU WITH THIS, MADAM?

OH! HOW KIND OF YOU.

CHOMP CHOMP

DRAT! BLUEBERRY'S MY FAVORITE!

I WISH THEY'D TIP US WITH MONEY INSTEAD OF DOUGHNUTS. IT WOULD MAKE IT SIMPLER.

HEY, IS THAT CHERRY? GIMME A BIT.

GET YOUR OWN!

SO I WAS SAYING, TODAY I WENT TO THAT WEIRD LITTLE MAN'S WAGON!

REALLY?

YOU TALKED TO HIM?

NOT HIM. BUT WHEN HE WENT OUT, I CREPT TO THE TENT AND—

FOUR DOZEN DOUGHNUTS!

...

WHAT KIND?

VIOUUU

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MONSTER TAMERS!

WE SAID, **GET LOST!** GO PEDDLE YOUR JUNK ELSEWHERE, CHARLATAN!

SLAP

EXCUSE ME!

YES, WHAT IS IT, GIRLIE?

YOU'RE MONSTER TAMERS, AREN'T YOU?

THAT'S RIGHT! THE PRINCE IS PAYING BIG FOR MONSTERS CAPTURED ALIVE. WE'RE HERE TO CATCH THE CAITSITH.

I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS! I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START!

HAHA! I DO!

LOOK AT *THIS!* A WEEK'S HAUL! JACKALOPE HORNS, LESHII HEART, AND A BASILISK'S HEAD!

IS THAT ALL OF IT?

"IS THAT—" YOU ***BRAT!***

TSH! WHAT DO YOU KNOW, ANYWAY?

I KNOW THAT LESHII ARE HARMLESS IF YOU JUST TRIM THEIR HEADS ONCE A YEAR.

AND THAT SINCE THAT BASILISK DOESN'T HAVE A WATTLE, IT WAS ALREADY PETRIFYING WHEN YOU CAUGHT IT!

HEY, NOW—

AND IF YOU'RE CATCHING SUCH BIG JACKALOPES NOW, IT MEANS YOU DIDN'T DO A GOOD JOB OF UPROOTING THEM IN THE SPRING!

SEE, IT'S MUCH BETTER TO DIG UP THE MOTHER ROOT ***BEFORE*** IT PUTS OUT JACKALOPES, AND YOU CAN EASILY FIND IT BY—

SHUSH! QUIET! THAT'S OUR LIVELIHOOD YOU'RE GIVING AWAY!

YOU WANDERING SORT OUGHTA BE GRATEFUL! IT'S US TAMERS KEEPING THE ROADS SAFE!

MY CAMP DOESN'T NEED YOUR HELP! THEY'VE GOT ME!

WAIT, WAIT. YOU'RE NOT SAYING ***YOU'RE*** A MONSTER TAMER, ARE YOU?

THAT'S RIGHT!
AND ONE DAY I'LL EVEN CROSS THE MONSTER'S CRADLE!

POKE

HLP!

OOF!

BONK

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!

KEEP DREAMING, KID!
EVEN THE BEST MONSTER TAMER IN THE WORLD COULDN'T DO THAT.

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PAT PAT

"THE BEST MONSTER TAMER IN THE WORLD"?

THAT COULD VERY WELL BE YOU.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WITH ONE OF THESE FABULOUS WEAPONS! HARDER THAN DIAMOND, THEY ARE!

ONLY TWENTY-FIVE CROWNS!

FORGET IT.

WEAPONS AREN'T YOUR FANCY? HOW ABOUT A CHARM, THEN? GRIFFON TAILS, JACKALOPE PAWS, DRAGON TEETH—

DRAGON TEETH?

YES! LET'S SEE IF I HAVE ANY LEFT.

AHA! THE LAST ONE!

WHAT DOES IT DO?

IT WILL BRING YOU GOOD LUCK!

IS THAT ALL?

OH NO! IT'S ALSO A POWERFUL AMULET THAT WILL, UH...

...AWAKEN THE GREAT POWER WITHIN YOU!

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CAN I HELP YOU WITH THOSE? GREAT! YOU'RE WELCOME!

HUH?

PHEW! THAT WAS PRETTY LUCKY!

HEY!

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WHY DID YOU BUY SO MANY PILLOWS?

I DIDN'T BUY THEM, I MADE THEM. I WAS SELLING THEM AT THE FAIR.

BY YOURSELF? THAT'S NEAT!

REALLY? THANKS.

SO...YOU WERE VISITING THE FAIR?

NO, I WORK THERE.

IN THE BAKERY?

NOPE! I'M A MONSTER TAMER.

WHY DID YOU BUY SO MANY PILLOWS?

I DIDN'T BUY THEM, I MADE THEM. I WAS SELLING THEM AT THE FAIR.

BY YOURSELF? THAT'S NEAT!

REALLY? THANKS.

SO...YOU WERE VISITING THE FAIR?

NO, I WORK THERE.

IN THE BAKERY?

NOPE! I'M A MONSTER TAMER.

IT'S EASY! BY THEIR TAI—

HUH?

HEY! STOP!

WHAT IS HE DOING?

HELLO?

PHEW!

FRTCH

FOUND YOU!

GAH!!

AAAAAAAAAH!

POF

...WEIRD.

WELL, I GOT A PILLOW AND A BOX OF DOUGHNUTS. THAT'S LUCKY, TOO, I SUPPOSE!

SNIFF SNIFF

BLEAH! FISH DOUGHNUTS! NOT SO LUCKY.

COULD THIS THING REALLY WORK? I WAS PROBABLY FOOLED BY THAT GUY.

IT WOULD MAKE A NICE NECKLACE. BUT I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY TO BUY A CHAIN. OR EVEN STRING!

KICK

ROLL

OH WOW! WHAT A PRETTY BALL OF TWINE!

AM I LUCKY OR WHAT?

CLAP CLAP

BEDTIME, CHILDREN!

THE STORY'S NOT DONE YET.

THAT'LL BE FOR ANOTHER TIME.

CEDRIC HAS TO TALK TO SURI.

HMM? OH, UH, YES.

LOOK, CEDRIC!

OH, WHAT A PRETTY NECKLACE!

IT'S A DRAGON TOOTH. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A POWERFUL AMULET THAT CAN—

MMHMM.

GRR. YOU'RE NOT LISTENING!

SIGH

SURI... HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU CAN OUTRUN LEON?

WELL, IF I'VE HAD BREAKFAST, AND I'M WEARING MY GOOD SHOES...

NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!

YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO WORK. IT'S TIME YOU GOT A JOB.

I HAVE A JOB!

I MEAN A ***REAL*** JOB. THIS IDEA OF BEING A MONSTER TAMER, IT'S... NOT REALISTIC!

AND ALL BECAUSE OF A DREAM YOU HAD WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE...

IT WASN'T A DREAM!

SURI, IF YOU DON'T GET A JOB LEON APPROVES OF, I'M AFRAID ONE DAY...

YOU REALLY WILL HAVE TO LEAVE.

FEH, THEN I'D RATHER LEAVE!

IS THAT SO?

ABSOLUTELY! I'M GOING TO BE A MONSTER TAMER, AND NOTHING WILL STOP ME OR SCARE ME OR—

ULP!

AH! CEDRIC! I HAVE SEARCHED ZE WHOLE CAMP. NO SIGN OF ZE MOUSE!

EVERYTHING IS SET FOR ZE PRINCE'S ARRIVAL.

REALLY? THAT'S GREAT!

GOOD NIGHT, LEON.

IT *IS* A GOOD NIGHT!

AND TOMORROW WILL BE PERFECT! SPLENDID! WONDERFUL!

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SIX CROWNS?!
FOR THREE JACKALOPE HORNS AND A LESHII HEART? WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT?!
GENEROUS! WE DON'T TAKE JACKALOPE HORNS ANYMORE.

SOME *HEM* UNSCRUPULOUS FOLK HAVE BEEN GROWING THEIR OWN.
JACKALOPE HORNS, AS YOU KNOW, KEEP GROWING WHEN STUCK IN FRUIT.

ARE YOU SAYING I'M A SWINDLER?

I'M SAYING WE DON'T TAKE JACKALOPE HORNS! GOOD NIGHT!

HRRF! SMUG-FACED, STUFFED SHIRT.

I HOPE A JACKALOPE EATS ALL YOUR TOES!

SNORT SIX MEASLY CROWNS.

"RUSTLE RUSTLE"

NO RESPECT! NO TRUST!

AND THAT LITTLE BRAT—"IS THAT ALL OF IT?" *RRRG!*

LEM, WHERE'S SID?

LEM?

LEM!

ZZZ—UH?!

ASLEEP AGAIN? I WASN'T GONE THAT LONG!

SORRY, VICTOR.

SO WHERE'S SID?

HE, UH, HE WENT TO CHECK ON A TRIP WIRE OVER THERE.

LET'S GO, THEN. PROBABLY ANOTHER JACKALOPE. WHY CAN'T WE EVER CATCH SOMETHING BIG?

ARE YOU STILL ANGRY ABOUT WHAT THAT GIRL SAID?

FOR THE LAST TIME, NO!

WELL NEITHER AM—

CRACK

WHAT WAS THAT?

SHH!

SOMETHING BIG.

RUSTLE

FRTCH

ACK! IT'S JUST A KID!

NO. I DON'T THINK IT'S JUST A KID... LOOK!

IT'S WHAT WE'RE AFTER! A CAITSITH!

HEH HEH HEH. I GUESS THIS IS MY LUCKY DAY.

VICTOR?

VICTOR!

AAAR—

CRACK

PSST!

?

PSST!

OH, YOU'RE THE WEIRD BOY FROM BEFORE...HOW DID YOU GET IN?

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING OF MINE?

SORRY, I DIDN'T KEEP THE FISH DOUGHNUTS.

NOT THAT!

SOMETHING ELSE!

SOMETHING... I LOST.

OH...

...YEAH.

GIVE IT BACK!

HMPF!

YOU SHOULD TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR THINGS IF YOU LIKE THEM SO MUCH.

GIVE IT BACK!

SHHH!

KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN!

SHEESH!

HERE! HAVE YOUR STUPID PILLOW BACK!

WAP

NO! THAT'S NOT—

GASP

WHAT?

THAT! AROUND YOUR NECK! THAT'S MINE!

IT IS **NOT!** I BOUGHT THIS MYSELF!

LIAR! SHE HAS IT!

SHE HAS IT!

THUMP

THAT WEIRDO BROUGHT HIS WHOLE FAM—

GAH! THEY'RE FAST!

!!!

SWSHH

WHERE DID SHE GO?
PHEW!
HOOO
MONSTER?
SHHH! PLEASE!
HAOOOO

HOOO

YOU HAVE TO BE QUIE—

FWSH

FOUND YOU.

GROOOAARR!

AAAH!

BOINK

GRAAOORF!!

SOMEBODY! HELP ME!

HUP!

DEAD END!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

GROOAAARR!

CLANG

CREAK

CRASH

CREAK

CRACK

CRACK

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CLANG

CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG CLA

CLANG
CLANG
CLANG

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

UH-OH!

PERFECT.

PERFECT! SPLENDID!
FANTASTIC! WONDERFUL!

OH BOY. LEON IS REALLY LOSING IT THIS TIME.

YEP.

AMAZING! MARVELOUS!
SPECTACULAR!

NOW, NOW, LEON.

WHAT WAS THAT THING, ANYWAY?

SOME SORT OF MONSTER FOR THE PRINCE, I HEAR.

WELL, I'M GLAD IT'S GONE.

YOU AND ME BOTH.

THOSE CRIES IT MADE CHILLED MY BLOOD!

AND THAT LITTLE MAN WHO OWNED IT—

HEY!

LOOK AT WHAT I FOUND!

CREEPY.

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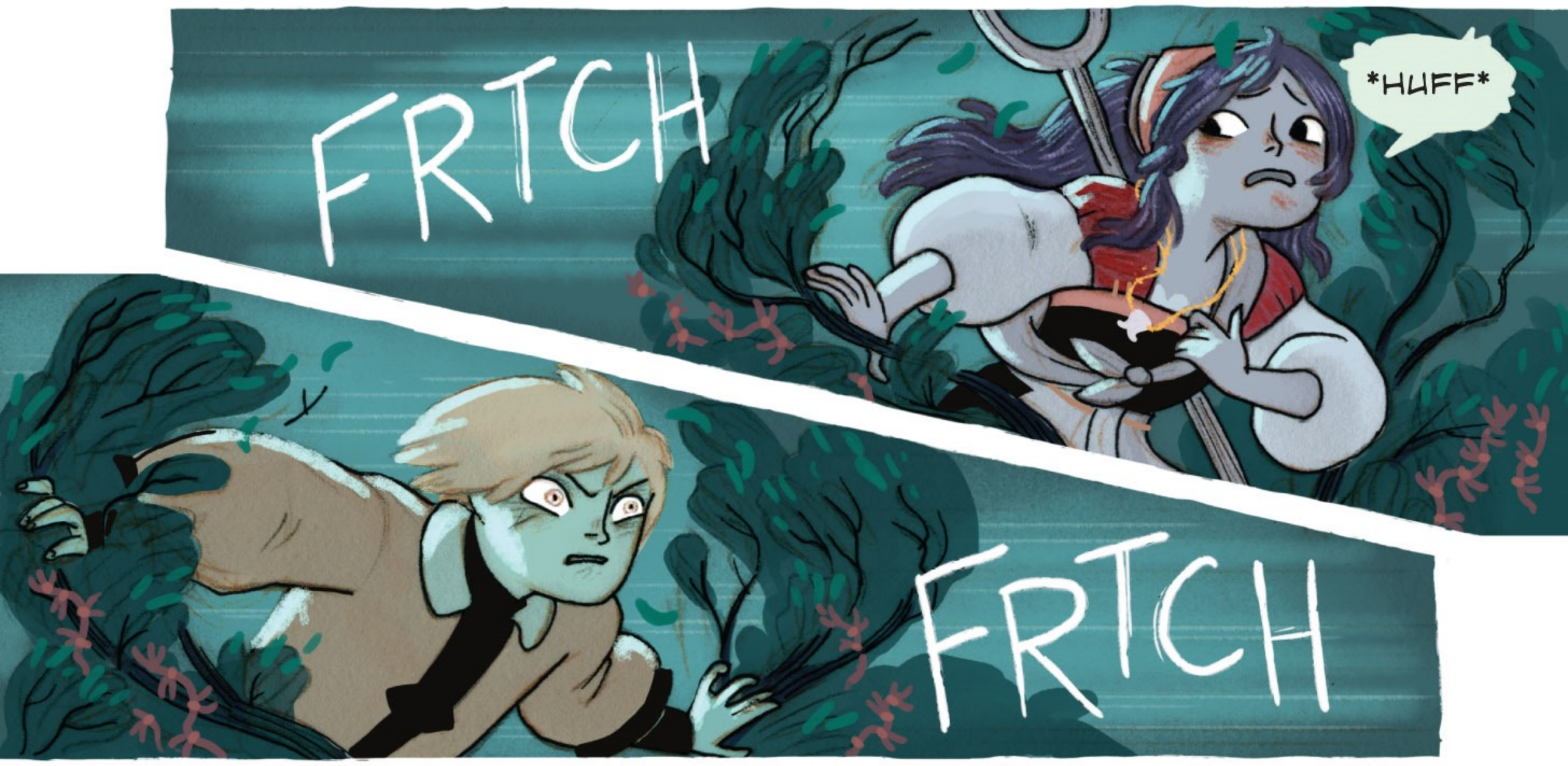

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FRTCH

SWSHH

*HUFF
HUFF*

Y-YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME!

TSHF

GET AWAY!!!

FWSHHH

THWUMP

...DID I JUST DO THAT?

Hisss!

!!!

WOOSHHH

FRTCHH

THAT REALLY WAS ME!

JUST TRY TO GET NEAR ME!

GRMF.

HAYAAH!

CRACK

FIZZZLE

HLP!

KYAAAH!

BONK

OW.

SEE, SHE *IS* A MONSTER TAMER.

QUIET, MOUSKA, YOU IDIOT! IT'S BECAUSE SHE HAS THE TWINE!

WAIT! LISTEN!

I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING...

EXACTLY.

SPREAD OUT QUIETLY.

HUFF HUFF

THIS DRAGON TOOTH REALLY WORKS!

I WON'T LET THEM GET IT!

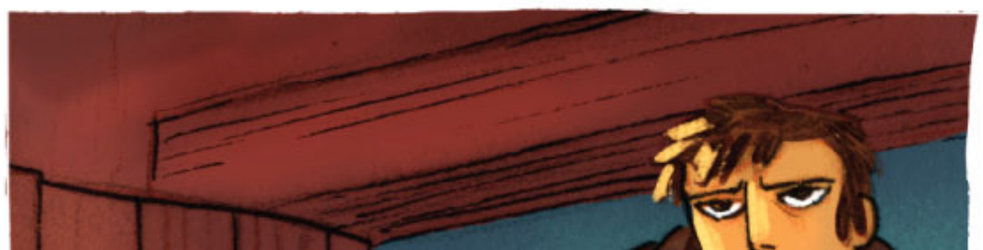
I DON'T HEAR THEM ANYMORE. MAYBE THEY'VE GO—OH!

TOSKA! THERE!

WHAM

ZIP ZIP ZIP

GRUNT
LET'S GO.



BONK

SNAP

SCOOT SCOOT

BUMP

?!!

CLICKA CLACK

!!!

THIS ISN'T A HUMAN HOUSE!

THESE PEOPLE ARE—

CAITSITHS!!!

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY, MOUSKA.

NOW WHAT DO WE DO WITH HER? WHY DID YOU BRING HER HERE?

BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T HAD SUPPER YET.

AND I'M GETTING MIGHTY TIRED OF CHICKEN.

!!!

NOOOO!

AWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

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W-WHAT WAS THAT?

TAGADAP TAGADAP TAGADAP

WHAMM

TAGADAP TAGADAP

CRASH

GROOOAARR!

HSSS!

TSSS!

THUD

HOO?

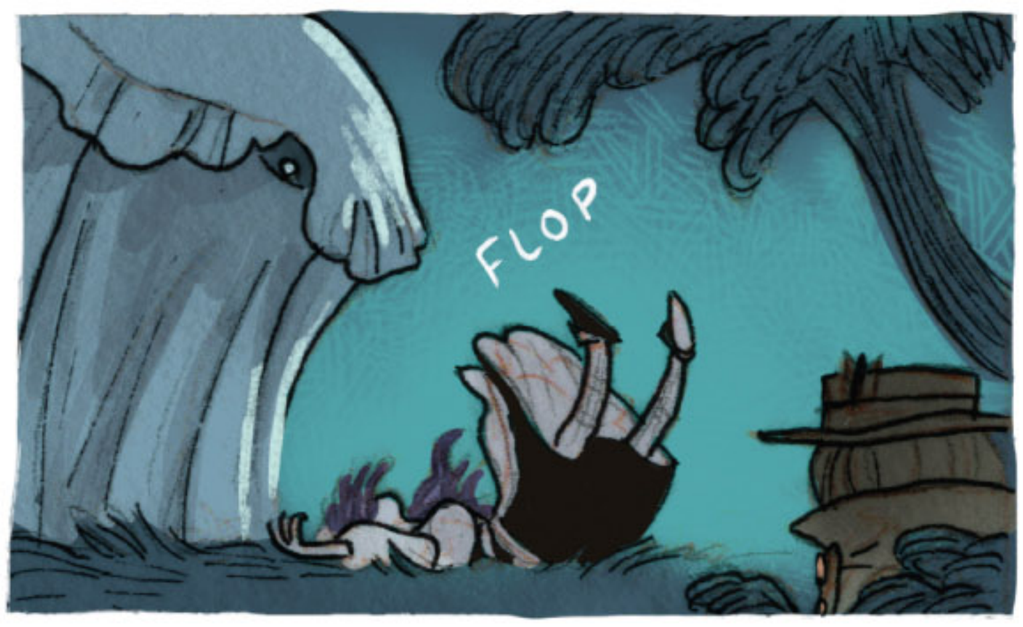
AWOOOOO!

NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!

AHA! SO IT WAS YOU!

EEYAAAAAAH!!!

HAAA...


FLOP

OH, THIS IS JUST GREAT.

TAP
TAP

WHAT IS TAKING SO LONG?!

WE'RE, UH, JUST WRAPPING UP A FEW THINGS.

ANY LUCK?

NO.

I COULDN'T FIND HER, EITHER.

OR HER THINGS!

COULD SHE HAVE LEFT?

SHE ALWAYS TALKED OF GOING UP NORTH, BUT DO YOU REALLY SUPPOSE...?

LET'S GO!

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

...

LET'S GO.

AH!

HMM?

WHAT ARE ALL ZESE SAD FACES?

I KNOW YOU ARE UPSET I MISSED MY CHANCE WIZ ZE PRINCE, BUT YOU ARE NOT HELPING ME LIKE ZIS!

PULL YOURSELVES TOGEZER!

RAH, YOU ARE ALL DEPRESSING ME!

CEDRIC! SAY SOMEZING TO CHEER ME UP.

I THINK WE LOST THE MOUSE.

HMPF! I HAVE HEARD *ZAT* BEFORE.

I THINK IT MIGHT BE FOR GOOD THIS TIME.

CHIRP
CHIRP

TIP

SCOOT
SCOOT

BUMP

IT'S ABOUT TIME!

YOU MAY'VE COST ME BIG BUCKS, LADY! BIG BUCKS!

WH-WHO ARE YOU?!

CAGLIO.

AND BYRON IS *MY* DOG. SO WHY DID HE GO ON A RAMPAGE TRYING TO FIND *YOU*?!

THEY WERE GOING TO EAT ME.

HUH?

WELL?

THE CAITSITHS. THEY CAPTURED ME...AND THEY WERE GOING TO EAT ME!

YOUR DOG SAVED ME.

YES, WELL, THOSE SERVICES AREN'T CHEAP, YA KNOW. BUT WE CAN TALK ABOUT MY FEE LATER. FIRST, LET'S GET BACK TO CAMP.

OH!

SNAP

HEY! THE CAMP IS THAT WAY!

IT SHOULD BE HERE SOMEWHERE!

AHA!

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YOU'RE A MONSTER?

OF COURSE! CAN'T YOU TELL?!

YOU LOOK MORE LIKE A SCRAWNY... UGLY...BABY.

I'M AN IMP!

AND I'M A 500-YEAR-OLD MONSTER MAKER! SHOW A LITTLE RESPECT!

WOW, REALLY?

SURE! SORT OF...ALMOST. I MEAN, I *AM* 500 YEARS OLD, BUT I'M STILL GETTING THE HANG OF THIS WHOLE MONSTER-MAKING BUSINESS.

JUST LOOK AT BYRON!

YOU MADE HIM? THAT'S PRETTY GOOD, ISN'T IT?

SOME MONSTER! HE DOESN'T LIKE PILLAGING OR TERRORIZING! HE DOESN'T EVEN LIKE BEING CALLED A MONSTER! HE'S A DISGRACE!

HOOO

TSK! DON'T SAY THAT!

WELL, I SUPPOSE HE *IS* DANGEROUS, IN HIS OWN WAY.

HOW DO YOU MEAN?

I CAN'T TELL YOU. IT'S TOO HORRIBLE.

HEY! THERE'S THE CLEARING!

HEM NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO FIRST.

SCARED YOU'LL BE IN TROUBLE?

NO!

BUT IF I AM, MAYBE YOU COULD COME BACK AND LET ME KNOW.

DON'T WORRY! WHEN THEY HEAR HOW BYRON SAVED ME, THEY'LL—

!

WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

HEY, THEY LEFT! GUESS I'M NOT IN TROUBLE, THEN.

CAW
CAW
MY WAGON IS RUINED, THOUGH.
CAW
HELP ME LOOK FOR MY THINGS!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

THEY LEFT WITHOUT ME.

I KNOW THAT LEON NEVER WANTED ME THERE, BUT THE OTHERS...*SNIFF*
I'VE BEEN PART OF THIS TRAVELING CAMP SINCE THEY FOUND ME. I DON'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE. I'M...

...I'M ALL ALONE.

HEY...

...BYRON'S RESCUE FEE IS FIFTY CROWNS.

WAAAHH!!!
I'M ALL ALONE WITH A MONSTER AND A COMPLETE JERK!!!

FORTY-FIVE, THEN?

ALL RIGHT, FORTY CROWNS AND SIX RONETS—BECAUSE I'M A NICE GUY!

OH, BYRON, I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO CALL YOU A MONSTER!

WAIT! SO YOU WERE CALLING ***ME*** A COMPLETE JERK?

YOU'RE NOT A MONSTER, BYRON.

YOU'RE A VERY NICE DOG.

PAT

AWOOOoOooo!!

OOF!!!

BYRON!

OW YOU'RE CRUSHING ME!

SERVES YA RIGHT! STILL THINK HE'S SO NICE?

HMF! WHY WON'T HE MOVE?!

SIGH HE THINKS HE'S A **LAP DOG.** CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? WHENEVER HE GETS MOPEY HE CUDDLES UP LIKE THIS. BUT AT HIS SIZE, HE JUST ENDS UP **SMOTHERING** PEOPLE TO DEATH.

HOOOO

WHAT?!

THAT'S WHY I TRIED TO SELL HIM. BUT I GUESS THEY DIDN'T WANT HIM, EITHER.

HOOO

CAN'T... BREATHE...

CAN'T SAY I BLAME 'EM, THOUGH. I MEAN, LOOK AT HIM! WHO WOULD WANT A LAP DOG THAT SIZE?

STOP... TALKING!

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, BYRON! *OOF* I'M SURE THAT THERE ARE LOTS OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD *OW* LOVE TO HAVE YOU AS A LAP DOG!

LIKE, LIKE...

...A GIANT!

HUFF HUFF

A GIANT? WHAT ARE YOU ON ABOUT?

OF COURSE! A GIANT!

THEY'RE GOOD MONSTERS! AND TO A GIANT, YOU'D BE THE PERFECT SIZE!

WE'D HAVE TO GO TO THE MONSTER'S CRADLE, THOUGH. ARE YOU UP FOR IT?

ROARF!

I DUNNO. THIS SEEMS LIKE AN AWFUL HASSLE.

THANKS, BUT I'D RATHER SELL HIM TO A CIRCUS OR SOMETHING! SEE YA!

HEY!

BYRON! HEEL! HEEL! I COMMAND YOU!

CLANG CLANG

STOP! TURN AROUND!

OH, WHY DON'T YOU JUST COME WITH US?

BONK BONK

BAD DOG! BAD!

I'M SURE THE GIANTS WILL PAY YOU A GOOD PRICE FOR BYRON.

AND THEIR COINS MUST BE THE SIZE OF DINNER PLATES!

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...

HEY, YEAH! HA HA! THAT'S A GREAT IDEA!

TO THE MONSTER'S CRADLE!

THE MONSTER IS STILL WITH HER.

AT LEAST WE HAVE THIS. BUT WE MUST GET BACK THE REST SOMEHOW!

SISKA, COULD I HAVE A BIT? MINE IS FINISHED.

YOU DON'T DESERVE ANY! THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!

PLEASE? I'M SCARED OF BEING SEEN LIKE THIS!

TSS! HERE!

MAKE IT QUICK!

GRMF! WHAT CAN WE DO? THAT MONSTER IS TOO STRONG.

WE HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING... FAST!

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

I DO SAY, YOUR HIGHNESS, IT WOULD SEEM THERE'S NOBODY HERE.

NO.

NO ONE IN SIGHT!

CAW CAW CAW

NO DOUBT THE INVITATION CAME FROM SOME CHARLATAN. I MEAN, A MONSTER OF THAT SIZE HERE? PREPOSTEROUS!

ABSURD.

LAUGHABLE, REALLY.

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THAT IS TO SAY...

IT'S AN OUTRAGE, OF COURSE, KNOWING HOW MUCH YOUR HIGHNESS WANTED TO HUNT A MONSTER.

A CALAMITY.

A TRAGEDY!

MONSTERS ARE SUCH LOWLY GAME, THOUGH.

VILE.

IGNOBLE, REALLY!

CAW CAW CAW

BUT NO MATTER! WE CAN GO HUNTING STILL! WOULD YOUR HIGHNESS FANCY PEACOCKS?

STAGS?

COUGARS, PERHAPS?

KAPOW

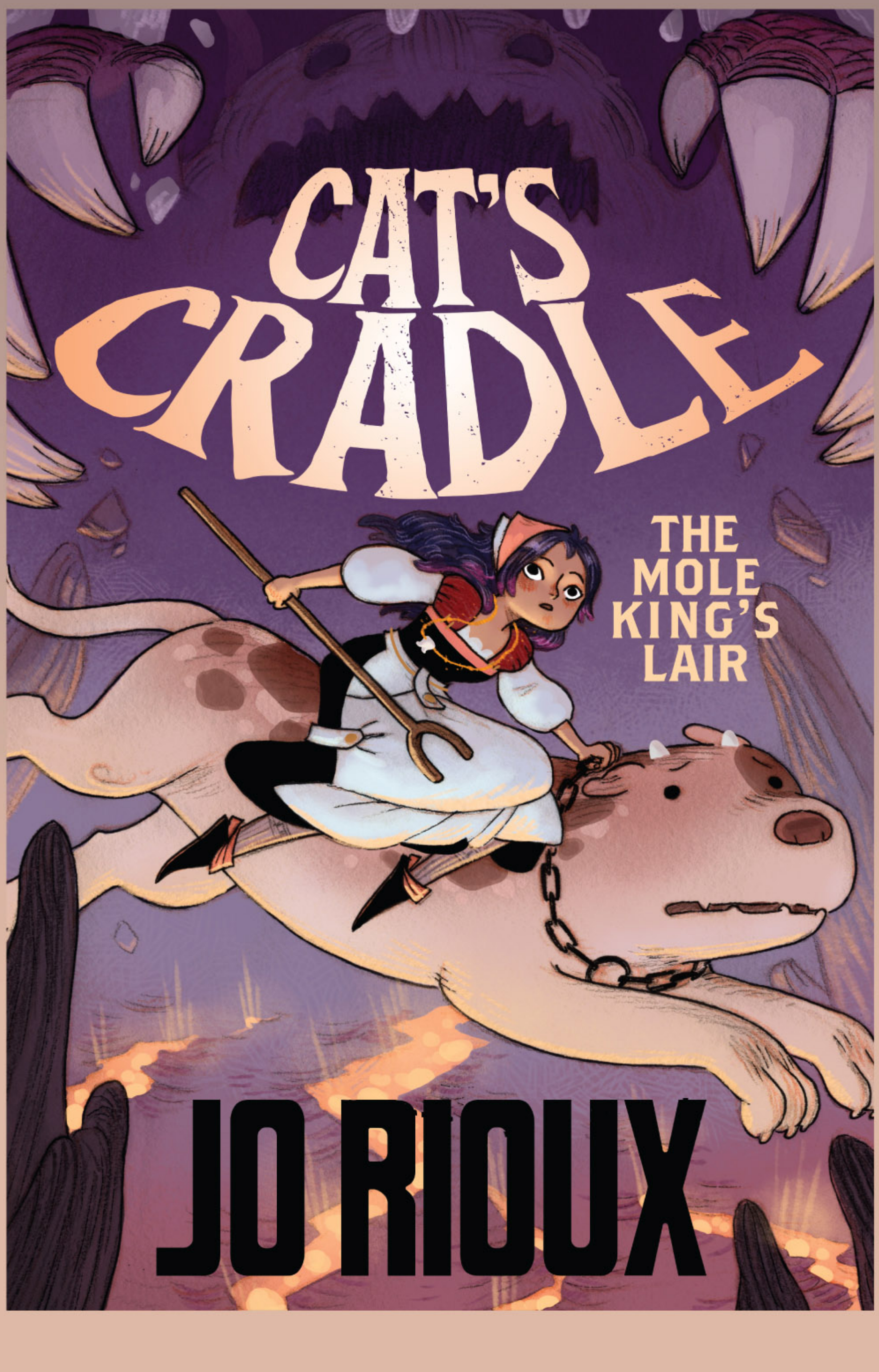
PEACOCKS, STAGS, COUGARS— GENTLEMEN, I HAVE HUNTED THEM ALL TO BOREDOM. WHAT I WANT IS A CHALLENGE, A NEW THRILL.

WHAT I WANT IS A MONSTER.

YOUR HIGHNESS!

IF IT'S A MONSTER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, I KNOW WHERE TO FIND ONE.

Suri's story contines in



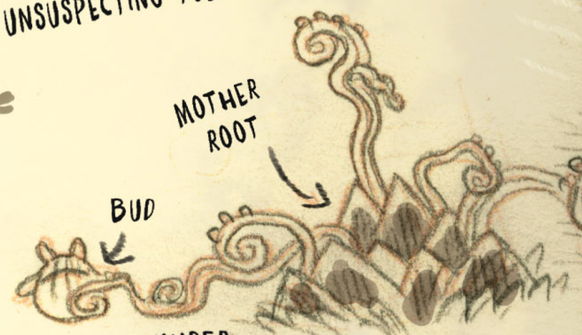
EXCERPTS FROM SURI'S JOURNAL

JACKALOPE

TYPE: PLANT MONSTER
DOMAIN: GARDENS, ORCHARDS
NATURE: BOTHERSOME

THEY USE THEIR HORNS TO FEED AND THEIR GIANT MOUTHS TO BITE UNSUSPECTING TOES.

JACKALOPES BUD UNDERGROUND FROM A MOTHER ROOT.



TO FIND THE MOTHER ROOT, LEAVE A WINTER APPLE UNDER A BUCKET ON THE GROUND. WHEN THE BUDDING JACKALOPE SPEARS IT, FOLLOW THE ROOT AND DIG OUT THE MOTHER.

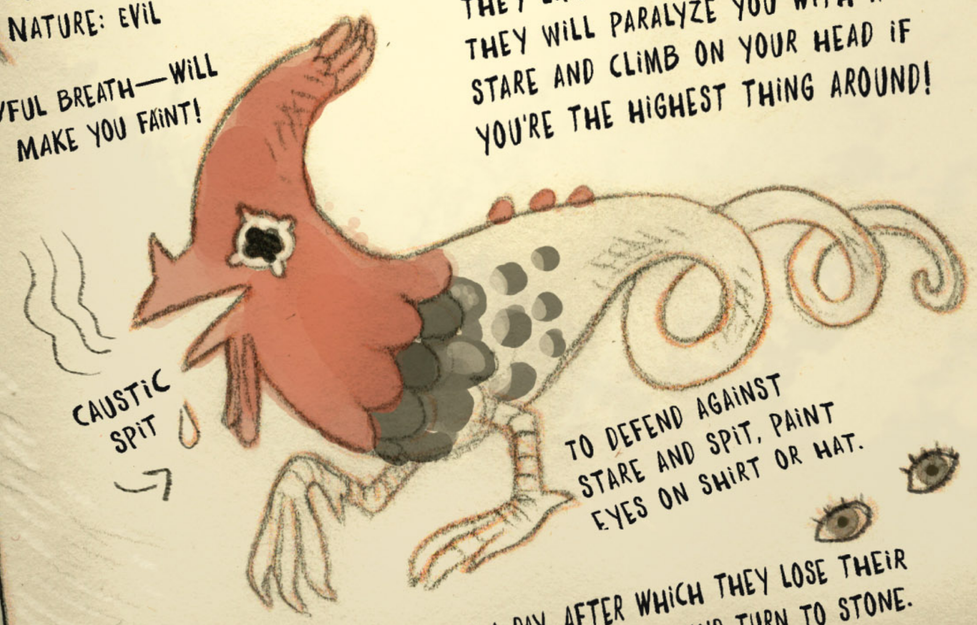
FAIRLY COMMON, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH OF SURN.

BASILISK

TYPE: ANIMAL MONSTER
DOMAIN: ROOFTOPS, SPIRES
NATURE: EVIL

BASILISKS SEEK HIGH PLACES, WHERE THEY LIKE TO STARE AT THE SUN. THEY WILL PARALYZE YOU WITH A STARE AND CLIMB ON YOUR HEAD IF YOU'RE THE HIGHEST THING AROUND!

AWFUL BREATH—WILL MAKE YOU FAINT!



CAN LIVE A HUNDRED YEARS AND A DAY, AFTER WHICH THEY LOSE THEIR WATTLE AND TURN TO STONE.

JACKALOPE JAM

- 2 POUNDS OF JACKALOPE EARS *
- 5 PINCHES OF ORANGE RIND
- 3 OZ OF ORANGE JUICE
- 14 OZ OF SUGAR
- 4 OZ OF WATER

BOIL EVERYTHING OVER A LOW FIRE UNTIL THICK

*USE RHUBARB IF JACKALOPE ISN'T IN SEASON.

CAITSITH (PRONOUNCED KATE-SITH OR KET-SHEE)

TYPE: SHAPESHIFTER
DOMAIN: AMONG HUMANS
NATURE: EVIL

RARE, THOUGH NO ONE KNOWS THEIR TRUE NUMBERS. MORE COMMON UP NORTH, NEAR THE MONSTER'S CRADLE. THEY CAN APPEAR PERFECTLY HUMAN EXCEPT FOR THEIR TAILS.

THEY LIKE THE NIGHT.

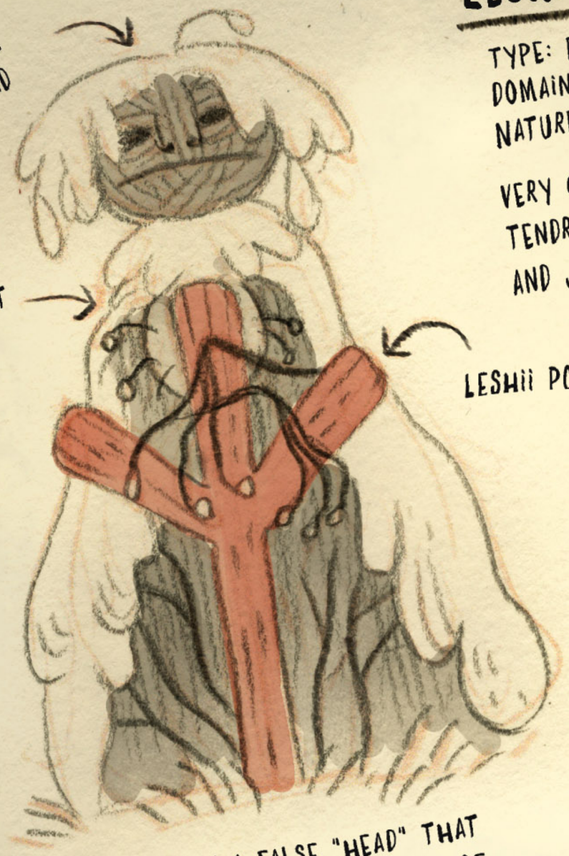
VERY DECEITFUL. THEY LIKE TO STEAL FROM AND TRICK HUMANS. IT'S SAID THEY EVEN LIKE TO EAT HUMAN FLESH!

I COPIED THIS FROM AN OLD WOODCUT. THE PANTS ARE KIND OF FUNNY!

LESHii

TYPE: PLANT MONSTER
DOMAIN: GARDENS, FIELDS
NATURE: BOTHERSOME/BENIGN

VERY COMMON. THEIR STICKY TENDRILS CAN CHOKE PLANTS AND JAM FARM EQUIPMENT.



STICKY SAP SMUDGE!

THEY GROW A FALSE "HEAD" THAT OFTEN RESEMBLES THE OWNER OF THE GARDEN THEY OCCUPY.

TO DESTROY, CUT OFF ALL TENDRILS UNTIL YOU REACH THE HEART. ALTERNATIVELY, WILL STOP SPREADING IF THE FALSE HEAD IS CUT OFF EVERY YEAR.

BETTER IDEA!

LESHii CAN EVEN BE HELPFUL! SOME FARMERS PLANT SPECIAL POSTS JUST FOR LESHii, AS THEY HELP TO KEEP JACKALOPES AWAY.

LESHii ANTI-ITCH SALVE

SCRAPE THE SAP OFF THE LESHii LEAVES AND MIX WITH A FEW DROPS OF WALNUT OIL. GOOD FOR JACKALOPE BITES!

HARD TO DETANGLE!

GIANT

TYPE: HUMAN-LIKE
DOMAIN: MOUNTAINS
NATURE: GOOD

VERY ANCIENT. SAID TO BE THE ONES WHO BUILT THE MOUNTAINS AND RAISED THE SKIES.

DON'T KNOW IF I BELIEVE THAT. MAYBE IF THEY STOOD ON EACH OTHER'S SHOULDERS???

25 TO 40 FEET TALL

THE ONLY KNOWN GOOD MONSTER. THEY BEFRIENDED HUMANS AND GAVE THEM FIRE FROM THE CLOUDS.

MOSS COATS. TREES GROW ON THEM!

CAMOUFLAGE?

ME: 4'9" BUT TALLER WHEN I STAND ON A ROCK

MONSTER TAMER: 5'10"

SELDOM SEEN TODAY, THEY ARE SAID TO ROAM THE MOUNTAINS NEAR THE MONSTER'S CRADLE, TRYING TO KEEP THE MONSTERS OUT.

First Second
Published by First Second
First Second is an imprint of Roaring Brook Press,
a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings Limited Partnership
120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271
firstsecondbooks.com
mackids.com

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2021923932

A previous version of *Cat's Cradle: The Golden Twine* was published in 2012 by Kids Can Press.
This new edition from First Second was reimagined and completely redrawn by the author.

FIRST EDITION

First edition, 2022
Edited by Mark Siegel with help from Robyn Chapman
Cover design by Kirk Benshoff
Interior book design by Molly Johanson

Penciled with Prismacolor Col-Erase in terra cotta and black.
Inked with Prismacolor Premier fine line marker in black.
Colored digitally with Photoshop.

eISBN 978-1-250-88802-0

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BY ART WE LIVE

CAT'S CRADLE

THE MOLE KING'S LAIR

JO RIOUX

CAT'S CRADLE

THE MOLE KING'S LAIR

CAT'S CRADLE

THE MOLE KING'S LAIR

JO RIOUX

:01

First Second
NEW YORK

TO KEITH—FOR HELPING ME
THROUGH THIS MONSTER OF A BOOK!

DAMAGY FOREST
TANCREDi
SURN
ROYAL CAPiTAL
DRAGON'S BELT

THIEF!

THIEF!

I'VE BEEN ROBBED!!!

CALL THE WATCH!

CLONG

CLONG

TSHF

TSHF

TSHF

CRACK

МИН!

МИИИН!!!

SLAP

?!
RRIIIP

!!!
CLING
CLANG
SPLASH

!ואיך

WHERE'S YOUR LOOT, KOLYA?

WITH SANYO'S. W-WE WERE TOGETHER.

...IS THAT TRUE?

...

SANYO?

SANYO?!

ACK!

OKAY, I LOST IT! THE BAG RIPPED WHILE I WAS—

HUNH!

EXCUSES!

THEY'RE AS USEFUL TO ME AS A THIEF WHO CAN'T STEAL!

IT WASN'T MY FAULT THIS TIME! THE BAG RIPPED—

HERE!

FLICK

?!

WHAT'S THIS FOR?

SEVERANCE.

YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.

LUTROV, WAIT! I CAN DO IT! YOU KNOW I CAN!

THEN PROVE IT.

WE LEAVE THE HIDEOUT IN TWO DAYS. IF YOU CAN BRING ME BACK SOMETHING GOOD BEFORE THEN, WE'LL TALK. IF NOT...

PLEASE! GIVE ME ONE LAST CHANCE!

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE!

TAKA
TAKA

KNOCK KNOCK

YES?

HELLO!
MY NAME IS SURI—
NICE TO MEET YOU!

I'M A TRAVELING MONSTER TAMER. IF ANY MONSTERS ARE GIVING YOU TROUBLE, I'M AT YOUR SERVICE!

IF NOT, I'M ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ODD JOBS AROUND THE HOUSE.

I CAN WASH WINDOWS, MEND FENCES, COOK— WELL, I'M NOT MUCH OF A COOK, BUT I CAN DEEP-FRY ANYTHING!

I CAN BEAT RUGS AND, UM... SHEAR SHEEP...
AND, UM... UH...

IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

EEYAAAAH!!!
SLAM

BYRON!

I SAID TO WAIT FOR ME! CAGLIO, CAN'T YOU WATCH HIM?

I STILL DON'T SEE WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS.

I TOLD YOU ALREADY! THE MONSTER'S CRADLE IS FAR UP NORTH. WE NEED MONEY FOR FOOD!

YOU SAY THAT, BUT YOU'VE REJECTED ALL OF MY HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS!

WHAT? HIGHWAY ROBBERY?

AND REGULAR ROBBERY!

WE'RE NOT DOING EITHER OF THOSE! BYRON SCARES PEOPLE ENOUGH AS IT IS.

THAT'S WHY IT WOULD WORK! HE'S A BIG, SCARY MONSTER!

AWOO!

DON'T CALL BYRON A MONSTER—IT'S BAD FOR HIS SELF-ESTEEM.

I'M TYING HIM TO THIS TREE. ***WATCH*** HIM THIS TIME!

YOU'RE GIVING ME ***ORDERS?!*** AND WHEN DID I STOP BEING THE LEADER OF THIS PARTY?

YOU NEVER WERE.

WELL, I AM, STARTING ***NOW!***

I'M IN CHARGE OF BYRON, AND ***I'M*** MAKING THE DECISIONS!

AND I'LL TALK TO MY MONSTER ANY WAY I LIKE!

CAGLIO!

YOU HEAR THAT?! YOU BIG, STUPID, SMELLY—

GRROOOAAR

CHOMP

EEEK!

BYRON! SPIT HIM OUT!

SLAP SLAP

PTOO

BOINK

OKAY.

YOU CAN BE IN CHARGE OF BYRON AND YOU CAN MAKE THE DECISIONS...

BUT OTHER THAN THAT, CAN I STILL BE THE LEADER?

FINE, FINE. YOU'RE THE LEADER.

AND IT'S ONLY THE FIRST DAY! SHEESH!

!

HELLO! THOSE TURNIPS LOOK HEAVY. CAN I HELP YOU WITH—

CRACK

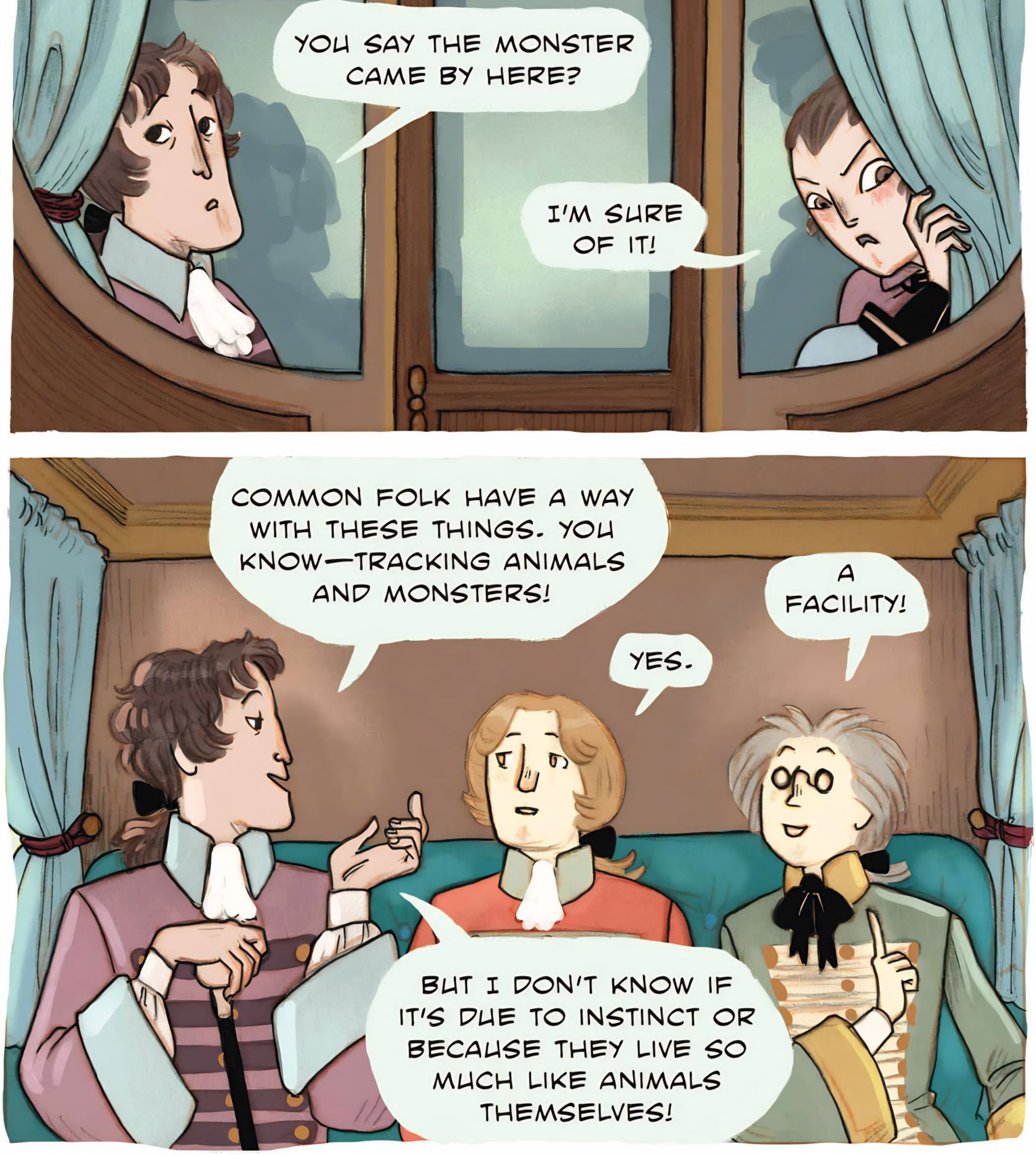
GASP

AAEEEH!

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON.

DON'T WORRY, I'VE GOT HIM!

YOU SAY THE MONSTER CAME BY HERE?
I'M SURE OF IT!


COMMON FOLK HAVE A WAY WITH THESE THINGS. YOU KNOW—TRACKING ANIMALS AND MONSTERS!
YES.
A FACILITY!
BUT I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S DUE TO INSTINCT OR BECAUSE THEY LIVE SO MUCH LIKE ANIMALS THEMSELVES!

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY, MY DEAR?

...I WOULD SAY MY BROTHERS AND I ARE *NATURAL* HUNTERS.

CHARMING!

WE, ALAS, MUST FIGHT OUR EVERY DELICATE SENSIBILITY.

FEW ARE THOSE WHO, LIKE HIS HIGHNESS, CAN ELEVATE THE HUNT TO AN ART!

A CRAFT!

A WAY OF LIFE!

LIFE *IS* A HUNT, GENTLEMEN.

THE STRONG HUNT AND THE WEAK ARE HUNTED.

BUT ONLY THE STRONGEST CAN HUNT THE HUNTER!

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BRA-VO, SIRE!

WELL SAID!

CLAP CLAP

CLAP

ANOTHER QUOTE FOR YOUR MEMOIRS!

FSHH!

PARDON?

FORK! WE'VE COME TO A FORK IN THE ROAD!

WE'LL GO SEE WHICH WAY THE MONSTER WENT!

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TOSKA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I DON'T LIKE THIS.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIKE IT! JUST KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT!

I NEVER ASKED TO TEAM UP WITH STINKIN' HUMANS!

I SAW AN OPPORTUNITY AND I TOOK IT!

NOW BE QUIET! WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS LATER!

SO? WHICH ROAD DID THEY TAKE?

UM...

NEITHER.

NEITHER? YOU LOST THEIR SCENT?!

N-NO! I MEAN THEY DIDN'T TAKE THE ROAD!

THEY WENT THROUGH THERE.

AHEM.
WHERE AM I LEADING US AGAIN?
SIGH

TO TANCREDI.

RIGHT! TANCREDI! CITY OF... UH...

IT'S THE RICHEST MINING TOWN IN SURN.

MAYBE WE CAN MAKE MONEY THERE.

OF COURSE! TANCREDI! CITY OF GOLD AND SILVER!

OOH, I DIDN'T THINK THIS WOULD BE SO HARD!

I'M USED TO SLEEPING OUTSIDE, BUT GETTING FOOD...AND BYRON NEEDS SO MUCH!

BUT YOU KNOW, I THINK MY BIGGEST FEAR ABOUT CROSSING THE MONSTER'S CRADLE WAS...DOING IT ALONE.

I THINK I'M GETTING THE HANG OF THIS LEADING BUSINESS!

THIS COULD BE MY TRUE CALLING! AT LEAST UNTIL I SELL BYRON TO THOSE GIANTS UP NORTH.

I WONDER HOW BIG THEIR COINS ARE...

THAT'S WHY I'M GLAD YOU DECIDED TO COME WITH US.

IT'S NICE TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS LIKE THIS!

AGREED!

FRTCH

DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?

IT'S PROBABLY BYRON! HE'S STILL WORKING THROUGH THOSE TURNIPS!

NOT THAT! IT SOUNDED LIKE—

CRSH CRASH CREEEK

CRASH

EEP.

AAAAAAH!!!

GRAAAAAK!!!

SNAP

CRACK
CRASH

WHAT IS THAT?!

I DON'T MIND STAYING IGNORANT! LET'S JUST—

LOOK OUT!

FRTCHH

AH!

OOF!

THUD

SPLAT

OOOH.

HGN! COME ON!

CRSH

CRASH

CRASH

CRASH

OH NO!

WE'RE TRAPPED! WE CAN'T RUN!

WAIT, LOOK!

WE CAN HIDE!

I HOPE BYRON IS OKAY!

CRSH

CRASH

ABANDONING HIS LEADER! WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON HIM...

HUFF
HUFF

GRAAAK!!!

GRAAAAK!

WE HAVE TO GET OUT!

ARE YOU JOKING?!

WE'RE MUCH SAFER HERE!

NO, I THINK IT'S A MOLE KING! THEY CAN EAT THROUGH ROCK!

...OH.

CRRACK

AAAAAAAH!!!

HEAVE HO!

HEAVE HO!

ONE FORGETS HOW TIRING PHYSICAL LABOR CAN BE!

INDEED!

MY VOCAL CORDS ARE PARCHED!

CLAP

CLAP

HEAVE HO!

CLEAR THE WAY!

GRAB

FRTCH

GOOD MAN! THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

PAT PAT

GRAOW!

PLEASE, MISS! THIS IS NO WORK FOR A LADY!

FRTCH

FRTCH

THE SOONER WE CLEAR THE WAY, THE SOONER WE CAN FIND THE MONSTER FOR HIS HIGHNESS!

HUSH! LISTEN!

AWOOOOOOO!

GENTLEMEN, GRAB THE GUNS AND POWDER! MY QUARRY IS NEAR!

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS!

TAKATAK TAKATAK

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TAGADAP

TAGADAP

EEEYAAAH!!!

CHOMP

RFF?

RFF?

GRAAAK!

AWOOOO!

GROOOAN

YOUR HIGHNESS!!!

YOUR HIGHNESS!

PLEASE!

SAY SOMETHING!

SEND WORD BACK HOME...

...I NEED THE CANNON.

SCRATCH SCRAK

OHMANOHMAN-OHMAN.

"ONE OF THE OLDEST BREEDS OF MONSTERS. ORIGINS UNKNOWN.

"MOLE KINGS ARE SECRETIVE AND COVETOUS. THEY RARELY LEAVE THEIR UNDERGROUND LAIRS, WHERE THEY GUARD THEIR TREASURE."

PUT THE BOOK DOWN! IT'S NO TIME FOR LESSONS!

THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING THAT WILL HELP!

SURI, AS YOUR LEADER, I'M ***ORDERING*** YOU TO TAKE CHARGE AND GET US OUT OF HERE!

CRACK

OKAY...TIME TO USE THE POWER OF MY DRAGON TOOTH!

WHATEVER WORKS!

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CRACK
CRUNCH

CRUNCH
CRUNCH

HAYAAAH!

PUFF

...WAS THAT IT? DID IT WORK?

UH...

CRRACK

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CRACK
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

YAH! YAH!
YAH!

WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?!

I— I CAN'T REMEMBER HOW I DID IT BEFORE!

SCRACK

HUH?

GRAAAAK!
GRAAAAAK!

GRRRR!

TSHFF

IT'S BYRON!

THWUMP

OH!

FRTCH

GRAOW!

GROO?

GRAK!

HEY!

FTCHH

DON'T YOU HURT HIM, YOU LUMPY TOOTHBALL!!!

"LUMPY TOOTH-BALL"?

SCREEK!

HAAAH!

FWSHHH

TSHARK

FSSSSSS

SCREEEK!
CRSH CRSH
CRSH CRSH

PHEW!

YEAH! GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM!

HA! LOOK AT 'IM RUN!

THWUMP

OOF!!!

AWOO!

HNG! IT'S OKAY, BYRON!

I'M GLAD YOU'RE SAFE!

THAT WAS GOOD, BUT WE NEED TO WORK ON YOUR TAUNTS. I MEAN, "LUMPY TOOTHBALL"? C'MON!

MOLE KINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE SECRETIVE. WHY DID IT ATTACK US?

HUFF *HUFF*

WHAT HAPPENED?

IS IT REALLY GONE?

OKAY. *HUFF* FAR ENOUGH.

I NEED *GASP* A BREATHER.

SNIFF

GAH!

GET YOUR MONSTER AWAY FROM ME!

HE'S NOT A MONSTER. HE'S REALLY JUST A BIG DOG.

YEAH? WELL I DON'T LIKE DOGS MUCH, EITHER.

WELL, *THIS* DOG SAVED YOUR BUTT! SO BE A LITTLE NICER.

HIS NAME IS BYRON. I'M SURI, AND THIS IS CAGLIO.

YO!

...KOLYA. *HUFF*

THANK YOU FOR...

HAAAA... I GOTTA CATCH MY BREATH.

WHY WAS THAT MOLE KING CHASING YOU?

GLUB GLUB GLUP

BECAUSE, OOF...

...I STOLE HIS GREATEST TREASURE.

GULP

INCIDENTALLY, BYRON'S RESCUE FEE IS FIFTY CROWNS!

SHUSH, CAGLIO!

YOU FOUND A MOLE KING'S LAIR? ARE YOU A MONSTER TAMER, TOO?!

HUH? NO.

NO, I FOUND IT BY CHANCE, SLEEPING IN A CAVE.

IN A CAVE? DO YOU...NOT HAVE A HOME?

N-NO, I DO! I JUST GOT LOST IN THE WOODS!

BEFORE DAWN, I WOKE UP TO THIS RINGING, LIKE A BELL.

I GOT CURIOUS AND FOLLOWED THE SOUND DOWN SNAKING TUNNELS, UNTIL I FOUND THIS CAVE.

A ***TREASURE*** CAVE!

THERE WAS A ***MOUNTAIN*** OF GOLD COINS, TEN METERS HIGH!

I WAS GOING TO FILL UP MY POCKETS, BUT THERE WAS SO MUCH! I WANTED SOMETHING TO CARRY IT IN.

AND THEN I SAW THIS BAG SITTING BY ITSELF IN THE NEXT CHAMBER.

AS I STARTED TO OPEN IT, I HEARD A VOICE BOOMING BEHIND ME.

STOP!

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THEN...IT WAS TOTAL CHAOS.

I GRABBED THE BAG AND BOOKED IT.

BEHIND ME CAME SHRIEKS AND GROWLS AND THIS VOICE YELLING ***"HE'S STEALING THE TREASURE!"*** OVER AND OVER.

I THOUGHT I WOULD ***DIE*** DOWN THERE!

BUT I ESCAPED. WITH A TREASURE MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD.

YOU MISHEARD ME WHEN I SAID FIFTY CROWNS! IT'S SEVENTY— NO, ONE HUNDRED!

ENOUGH!

HOP HOP

PFFT! THAT'S PEANUTS COMPARED TO WHATEVER THIS—

THIS...
THIS...

BZZZZZZ

WHAT IS THIS?!

IT LOOKS LIKE A CHAIR. NO, A STUBBY TABLE!

A TABLE.

NO...

WOBBLE

NO. NO. NO!

WHY DIDN'T I JUST TAKE THE GOLD?! WHY?!

HEY, IT'S OKAY!

NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I ***NEEDED*** THAT MONEY!

AND NOW IT'S TOO LATE!

NO, IT ISN'T! BECAUSE WE'RE GOING BACK!

UM...

WE NEED MONEY, TOO!

WE'RE HEADING FOR THE MONSTER'S CRADLE, AND WE NEED FOOD FOR OUR TRAVELS.

SO LET'S GET THE TREASURE TOGETHER!

...I CAN'T.

SURE YOU CAN! WITH THE FOUR OF US—

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!

IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME! I ***CAN'T*** GO WITH YOU.

...

SO...ABOUT BYRON'S RESCUE FEE—

HERE. TAKE THIS.

THIS ISN'T EVEN WORTH FIVE RONETS!

YOU'RE REALLY GIVING IT TO US?

SURE. WHY NOT. THANKS FOR SAVING ME.

TONK TONK

SNUF SNUF

LICK

WELL, AT LEAST BYRON LIKES IT!

SLOB CRUNCH CRUNCH

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GURGLE

WE'RE GOING TO SIT FOR LUNCH IF YOU WANT TO JOIN US.

...FINE.

LICK LICK

"LUNCH"?

WE HAVE FOOD?!

JUST A FEW BEAN CAKES AND SAUSAGES.

WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO BEFORE?!

BECAUSE YOU WOULD'VE EATEN THEM BEFORE!

IT'S ALL WE HAVE!

I ACCEPT YOUR APOLOGY. GIMME!

CRUNCH

THAT BREAD MUST BE A WEEK OLD!

CRUNCH CRUNCH

YEAH, IT'S A LITTLE OLD. NO BIG DEAL.

MUNCH MUNCH

...

CRMB

DO YOU WANT SOME?

UH... SURE!

HERE YOU G—

TRIP

STUMBLE

OH!

AH!

EEP!

!!!

ZIP

CATCH

HEH. THANKS.

THANK *YOU!*

GOSH, HE MOVES FAST! ALMOST *TOO* FAST!

ALMOST LIKE...

...A CAITSITH!

MMM. THIS IS GOOD!

HE SITS A BIT LIKE A CAT.

AND THOSE TWO TUFTS OF HAIR ALMOST LOOK LIKE EARS!

COULD HE BE...?!

OKAY, CALM DOWN.

I'LL SEE IF HE HAS A TAIL! CAITSITHS CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING BUT THEIR TAILS!

TAP TAP TAP

TAP TAP TAP

...

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WHAT?

NOTHING!

I CAN'T TELL! I HAVE TO FIND A WAY—A ***SUBTLE*** WAY—OF MAKING SURE!

PSST!

CAGLIO, I NEED YOU TO MAKE A DIVERSION.

YOU GOT IT!

WAIT, DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT FOR?

TOO LATE! YOU ASKED! NO TAKE BACKS!

YAHAAAH!

YOINK

GRRRRR

ROAR

OOF!

NOW'S MY CHANCE!

LET ME HELP YOU UP!

WH-WHAT HAPPENED?

YA YA YAAARRH!

CHOMP CHOMP

BOY, YOUR FRIENDS ARE REALLY WEIR—

GOT SOME DUST HERE.

AND HERE.

PAT PAT PAT PAT

HUH, NO TAIL! GUESS I WAS WRONG.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

AAA

STILL, I'M GLAD I CHECKED.

NOW I CAN EAT IN PEACE.

GRRR SNARF CHOMP

I HAVE TO GO.

THANKS FOR THE CAKE.

AND, YOU KNOW, FOR SAVING MY LIFE.

ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T COME WITH US?

SORRY, I REALLY CAN'T.

I HAVE TO GO HOME.

YOU DON'T SOUND HAPPY ABOUT IT.

I'M NOT.

I HAVE TO GO BEG FOR MY OLD JOB BACK. AND I DON'T EVEN LIKE IT.

WHY? WHAT IS IT YOU DO?

HURP

IT'S NOTHING, REALLY.

I JUST...LIFT THINGS, MOSTLY. I HATE IT.

ARE YOU NOT VERY GOOD AT IT?

I BET THAT'S IT.

NO!

WHY WOULD THAT BE YOUR FIRST GUESS?!

I'VE JUST GOT BAD LUCK, THAT'S ALL!

SORRY. I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HATE YOUR WORK...

...AND TO FEEL LIKE YOUR LIFE IS WAITING SOMEWHERE ELSE.

BUT DON'T GIVE UP! THE WORLD'S FULL OF OPPORTUNITIES!

THE LITTLEST THING COULD COME ALONG AND CHANGE YOUR LUCK COMPLETELY!

YEAH. NOT LIKELY.

...

YAWN

I KNOW! WHAT YOU NEED IS A GOOD LUCK CHARM!

I'VE GOT JUST THE THING!

IT'S OKAY.

HMM. IT'S IN HERE SOMEWHERE!

BINK

BONK

YOU DON'T NEED TO, REALLY—

!!!

MAYBE I PUT IT IN MY APRON...

AHA!

HERE YOU GO!

THAT'S... UH...

THAT MOLE KING CHIPPED A TOOTH EARLIER.

IF IT'S ANYTHING LIKE MY DRAGON TOOTH, IT'LL BRING YOU TONS OF LUCK, TRUST ME!

...THANK YOU.

GOOD LUCK, KOLYA!

MAYBE WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOMETIME!

YES. I THINK WE WILL.

GOOD. THEY'RE STILL THERE.

TSHF

FRRT

TADAP

AH, INNKEEPER! YOU COME JUST IN TIME.

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OH?

I WAS COMING TO SEE IF THE PRINCE WAS CALM ENOUGH, ERM...*DISPOSED* TO RECEIVE VISITORS.

VISITORS?

THERE ARE MANY FOLKS WAITING OUTSIDE, WISHING TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS.

MY GOOD MAN, THE PRINCE IS NOT DISPOSED TO DO ANYTHING UNTIL WE DEAL WITH *THIS!*

IS THE MEAL NOT TO HIS LIKING?

UNSWEETENED BREAD. UGLY MEAT. AND CHEESE THAT—I WAS TOLD—CAME FROM A GOAT! HONESTLY!

I RECALL THE INNS OF TANCREDI HAVING A BETTER REPUTATION THAN THIS!

CLINK

I APOLOGIZE, MY LORDS. WE WERE A PROSPEROUS TOWN, ONCE...

...BUT THREE YEARS AGO, ONE OF OUR MINING CREWS DISAPPEARED IN THE MOUNTAIN.

EVERY RESCUE PARTY WE SENT AFTER THEM DISAPPEARED AS WELL. NOW, NO ONE DARES TO GO BACK.

WITH THE MINE CLOSED, THE CITY IS HALF DESERTED, THE BUILDINGS FALLING TO RUIN OR BEING PICKED APART BY THIEVES.

BUT THE MINERS WHO ARE LEFT ARE KEEN TO WORK AND OFFER THEIR SERVICES TO THE PRINCE!

SNIFF

WHAT A TRAGIC TALE.

THE PRINCE IS IN NO MOOD TO HEAR *THAT!*

HONK

OH, NO!

TOO DEPRESSING!

I SEE...

THE PRINCE IS DEALING WITH HIS OWN TRAGEDY!

A TWISTED ANKLE AND A SPRAINED THUMB!

JUST THINK—

NOD

NOD

—IT'S CAUSING HIM TO RECONSIDER HIS HUNTING TRIP!

!!!

SORRY TO HAVE BOTHERED YOU.

I'LL SEND UP ANOTHER MEAL.

TAP TAP

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TSHFF

TSHFF

WHAT A DREADFUL PLACE!

FIRST MOUNTAIN GOATS, AND NOW MOUNTAIN *GHOSTS.*

LET'S CONVINCE THE PRINCE TO ABANDON THIS HUNT AND BE OFF.

CREEAK

YES.

THE SOONER THE BETTER!

CREEEAK
KA-TCHUNK

...
MISS?

HEH.
I...SAW A
MOUSE.

TADAP

GOOD
DAY.

TSHF

BAD NEWS, TOSKA! WE—

ACK!

SQUEAK SQUEAK

GRAB

HAVE YOU NO SENSE?! WHAT IF SOMEBODY SAW YOU?!

I'M HUNGRY.

THEN GO DOWN TO THE KITCHEN!

OUR BOARD IS PAID FOR!

HUMAN FOOD. YECH.

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!

OUR PLAN IS ON THE VERGE OF CRUMBLING!

OUR PLAN?

NO, YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S ***MY*** PLAN! IT'S ***ALWAYS*** MY PLAN!

IF IT WAS UP TO ***YOU***, WE'D BE LIVING NAKED UNDER TREE STUMPS, PICKING OUR TEETH WITH MOUSE FEET!

GRMF! GREAT PLAN SO FAR.

THE PROBLEM WITH YOU IS YOU CAN'T SEE THE BIG PICTURE!

GETTING THE TWINE BACK IS ONLY THE START.

PERHAPS YOU'RE HAPPY TO GO BACK TO OUR BURNT-OUT HOVEL IN THE FOREST, BUT *I'M* NOT.

THE PRINCE IS OUR GOLDEN GOOSE!

SO IF YOU CAN'T *TRY* TO MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL, THEN STAY OUT OF MY WAY!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

GETTING OUT OF YOUR WAY.

TOSKA!
FLAP

MOUSKA!

SNIFF

SNIFF
SNIFF

BAD NEWS, MOUSKA! WE—

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CHOMP

ACK!

HAVE YOU NO SENSE?! WHAT IF SOMEBODY SAW YOU?!

I'M HUNGRY!

A WHOLE HAM AND SWEET LOAF?!

YOU'D THINK YOU'RE THE PRINCE HIMSELF!

AW, SISKA!

YOU CAN HAVE IT LATER! I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU.

GO DOWN TO THE STREET.

GATHER ALL THE TOWNSFOLK YOU SEE AND BRING THEM UNDER THE PRINCE'S WINDOW.

WHA— HOW?

TELL THEM THE PRINCE HAS WORK FOR THEM. HURRY!

ZIP

CLINK

!

PLEASE, ALLOW ME!

N-NO, MISS! IT WOULDN'T BE PROPER!

MY APOLOGIES! I DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD BE SO KEEN TO PRESENT THIS PLATTER TO THE PRINCE!

AND BE THE ONE TO RECEIVE HIS FRANK OPINION ON IT.

OH...I'M SURE YOU KNOW BEST, MISS!

KNOCK KNOCK

WHAT WORK HAS THE PRINCE GOT FOR US?

DUNNO.

HOW MUCH WILL HE PAY?

NO IDEA.

IS IT GONNA START SOON?

CAN'T SAY.

WELL, WHAT *CAN* YOU SAY?

GOT ANY HAM?

WHAT?

HEY! LOOK!

THE PRINCE!

THE PRINCE!

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YOU SEE, YOUR HIGHNESS, THERE'S NO REASON TO ABANDON YOUR HUNT.

YOU MERELY HAVE TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOW TO FIND YOUR PEOPLE READY TO SERVE YOU.

HMM. IT WOULD BE...*UNGRACIOUS* TO TURN THEM AWAY.

VERY WELL. READY THEM FOR THE HUNT TOMORROW.

PHEW!

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

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YUM, YUM...

...YUH?

WHO TOOK MY FOOD?!

LET'S GO THROUGH THE CHECKLIST AGAIN. FOOD?

NONE.

WEAPONS?

NONE.

IDEA OF WHERE THE TREASURE IS?

ABSOLUTELY NONE.

RIGHT. AFTER YOU!

SIGH

AT LEAST IF KOLYA WAS WITH US...

THAT GUY? PFF! WE DON'T NEED HIM!

I CAN'T STAND COMPLAINERS. AND IF YOU ASK ME, HE WAS KINDA ***RUDE***, TOO.

YEAH, BUT HE KNEW THE WAY TO THE TREASURE.

SIGH IF ONLY MY MAGIC COULD MAKE FOOD APPEAR!

THEN WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS!

WAIT—YOU KNOW MAGIC, DON'T YOU?

HUH?

YOU SAID YOU MADE BYRON! HOW DID YOU DO IT?

YOU KNOW, THE TRADITIONAL WAY!

TOAD SPIT. EYE OF NEWT.

ICK! NEVER MIND.

OKAY, MISS JUDGY! HOW DO ***YOU*** DO MAGIC?

I DONT KNOW! IT JUST—POOF—HAPPENS!

IT'S LIKE IT...BUBBLES UP WHEN I'M NOT THINKING.

OKAY, THEN STOP THINKING!

THINK OF NOTHING BUT A BLANK SLATE— THEN STOP THINKING ABOUT THAT, TOO!

HRRRMMM!

FEEL ANYTHING BUBBLING?

...YES!

THEN LET IT OUT!

RAAAH!

DOUGHNUTS!

MEATBALLS!

BEAN CAKES!

TAK TAK TAK

DUMPLINGS! PICKLED EGGS!

GOAT ROAST!

FISH FONDUE!

TAK TAK

...

SNAP

FRIED—

OOF!!!

DARN, I THINK IT WAS STARTING TO WORK.

OW! WHAT IS IT, BYRON?!

IT'S JUST ME.

KOLYA!

YOU CAME BACK!

I FELT BAD.

I DIDN'T THANK YOU PROPERLY FOR SAVING ME.

SO I BROUGHT YOU THIS.

THANK YOU!

HA HA! THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

BOINK

BOINK

SNIFF SNIFF

DOES THIS MEAN...

YOU'RE COMING WITH US TO THE MOLE KING'S LAIR?

YEAH. FOR SURE.

WHAT CHANGED YOUR MIND?

OH, JUST... WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER.

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY THAT I WOULDN'T WANT TO MISS.

WHAT A RELIEF!

I THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO GO INTO TOWN TOMORROW TO SELL THE TABLE FOR PROVISIONS.

BUT NOW WE CAN SET OFF FOR THE CAVE AT FIRST LIGHT!

AND IN THE MEANTIME...

NOT THE BOOK AGAIN!

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THIS BOOK IS INVALUABLE! IT'S WHERE I WRITE EVERYTHING I LEARN ABOUT MONSTERS.

I NEVER GOT TO WRITE ABOUT THE MOLE KING OR THE CAITSITHS.

OH YEAH. YOU SAID YOU MET SOME.

YOU...MET SOME CAITSITHS?

THREE OF THEM, LIVING IN THE FOREST.

THEY WERE THE FIRST MONSTERS I FOUGHT AS A MONSTER TAMER.

YOU'RE A MONSTER TAMER?!

YES!

CHOMP CHOMP

I GUESS I TAMED BYRON FIRST. BUT HE'S SUCH A SWEETHEART, IT DOESN'T REALLY COUNT!

CAITSITHS ARE EVEN MORE VICIOUS THAN I'D HEARD!

THEY ATTACKED ME WITH NO PROVOCATION, JUST TO TAKE MY AMULET!

I FOUGHT OFF TWO, BUT THEN THE BIGGEST ONE BROKE MY TAMING WAND AND CAPTURED ME.

THEY WERE GOING TO *EAT* ME!

THANKFULLY, BYRON CAME AND TOOK CARE OF THEM!

CRACK

CRR

THERE, DONE! NOW—TELL ME, KOLYA!

WHAT?!

TELL YOU WHAT?

THE MOLE KING! TELL ME ALL YOU LEARNED ABOUT IT!

OH. I DIDN'T NOTICE MUCH. I WAS TOO BUSY RUNNING FOR MY LIFE.

HMMM, PITY.

HOW ABOUT THE TREASURE, THEN? TELL US ABOUT THAT AGAIN!

GET OFF!

I'M TIRED! I WANT TO REST FOR TOMORROW.

BOY, WHAT A GROUCH.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, CAGLIO?

I DON'T HAVE AN ENTRY FOR IMPS.

IMPS? WHERE TO START?

WE'RE SMART, OF COURSE. AND BRAVE. HANDSOME, BUT WITH AN AIR OF QUIET DIGNITY.

WE'RE WELL RESPECTED AMONGST MONSTERS.

TOO RESPECTED, IN FACT!

THAT'S WHY THE OTHER MONSTERS DON'T LIKE US OR INVITE US TO PARTIES— THEY'RE JEALOUS!

ARE YOU GETTING ALL THIS?

YEP.

DELUDED
CONCEITED
LIES A LOT

AND WHERE DO IMPS COME FROM?

ALL SORTS OF PLACES!

MYSELF, I CONGEALED IN A CAULDRON OF BONE SOUP THAT SPOILED ON THE FIRE.

THAT'S HORRID!

NO, AN IMP'S PULLULATION IS A BEAUTIFUL THING!

I HAVE A SISTER THAT SPROUTED FROM A LOAF OF MOLDY BREAD. AND A BROTHER THAT OOZED OUT OF A PILE OF ROTTEN POTATO PEELS.

TO BE FAIR, MY SISTER *IS* A BIT HORRID.

AND MY BROTHER'S WORSE! HE'S CRABBIER THAN THIS GUY HERE!

DESCRIBE HIM AND I'LL DRAW HIM!

THAT'S PRETTY GOOD, BUT MAKE HIS OTHER EYES BEADIER.

HIS *OTHER* EYES?!

HE HAS EYES ALL OVER! EVEN HIS BOTTOM!

EEYAAH! HOW DOES HE SIT?!

REEEALLY CAREFULLY.

HA HA HA HA HA HA

A GOLD CROWN!

AND MORE WHEN THE HUNT'S OVER!

HUNTING MONSTERS— AREN'T YOU SCARED?

ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN TWIDDLING MY THUMBS ALL DAY.

WHO WANTS MINCE PIES? I'M BUYING!

NONE OF THESE ARE HUNTING WEAPONS.

THE PRINCE'S TRACKER SAID TO GRAB WHATEVER WE HAD.

IT'S NICE TO BRING OUT OL' POKEY AGAIN!

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO WEAR YOUR BEST CLOTHES?!

THE TRACKER INSISTED ON IT.

SHE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT KEEPING THE THREE TOADIES HAPPY.

ALL SOLD?

YEAH. YOU WERE RIGHT TO MAKE EXTRA!

!!!

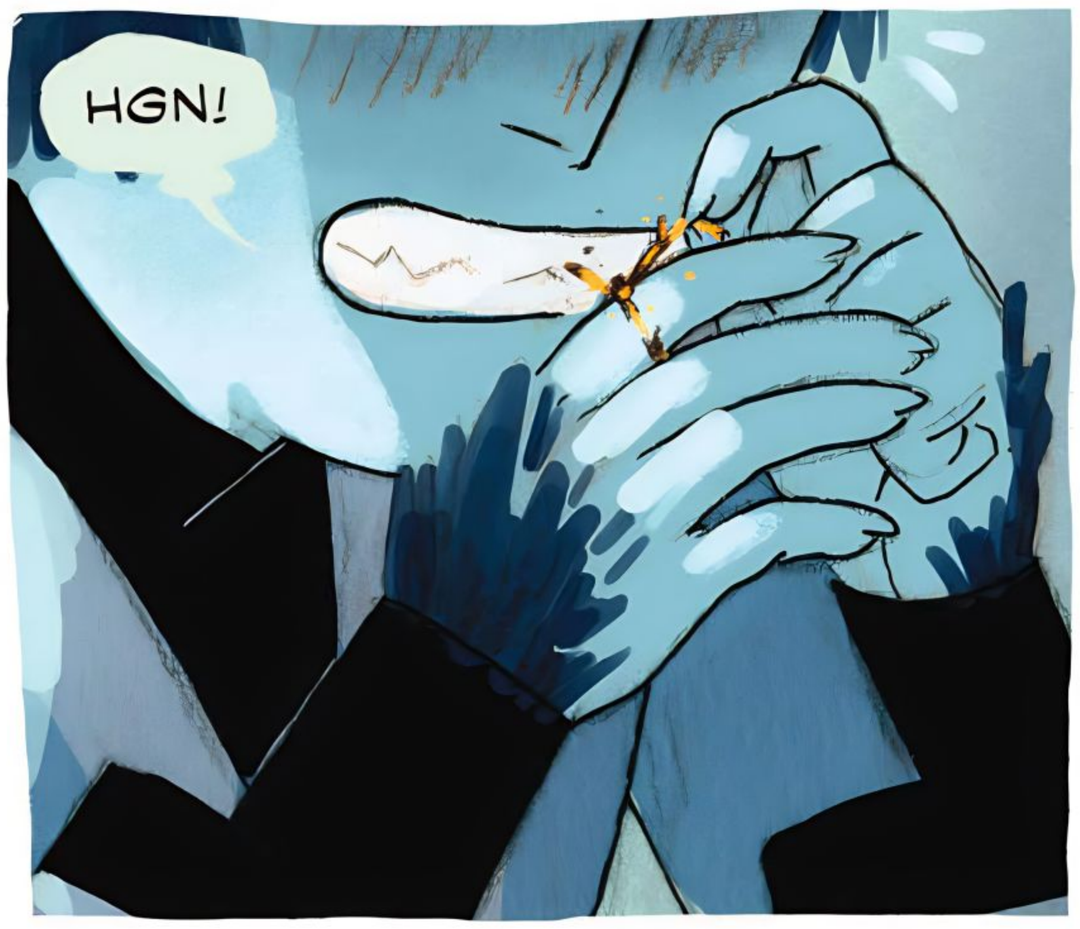
T-TOSKA?!

LUTROV... IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

ZZZZZ
SNOZZ

ZZZZZ

COME ON!
COME ON!


HGN!

FFR

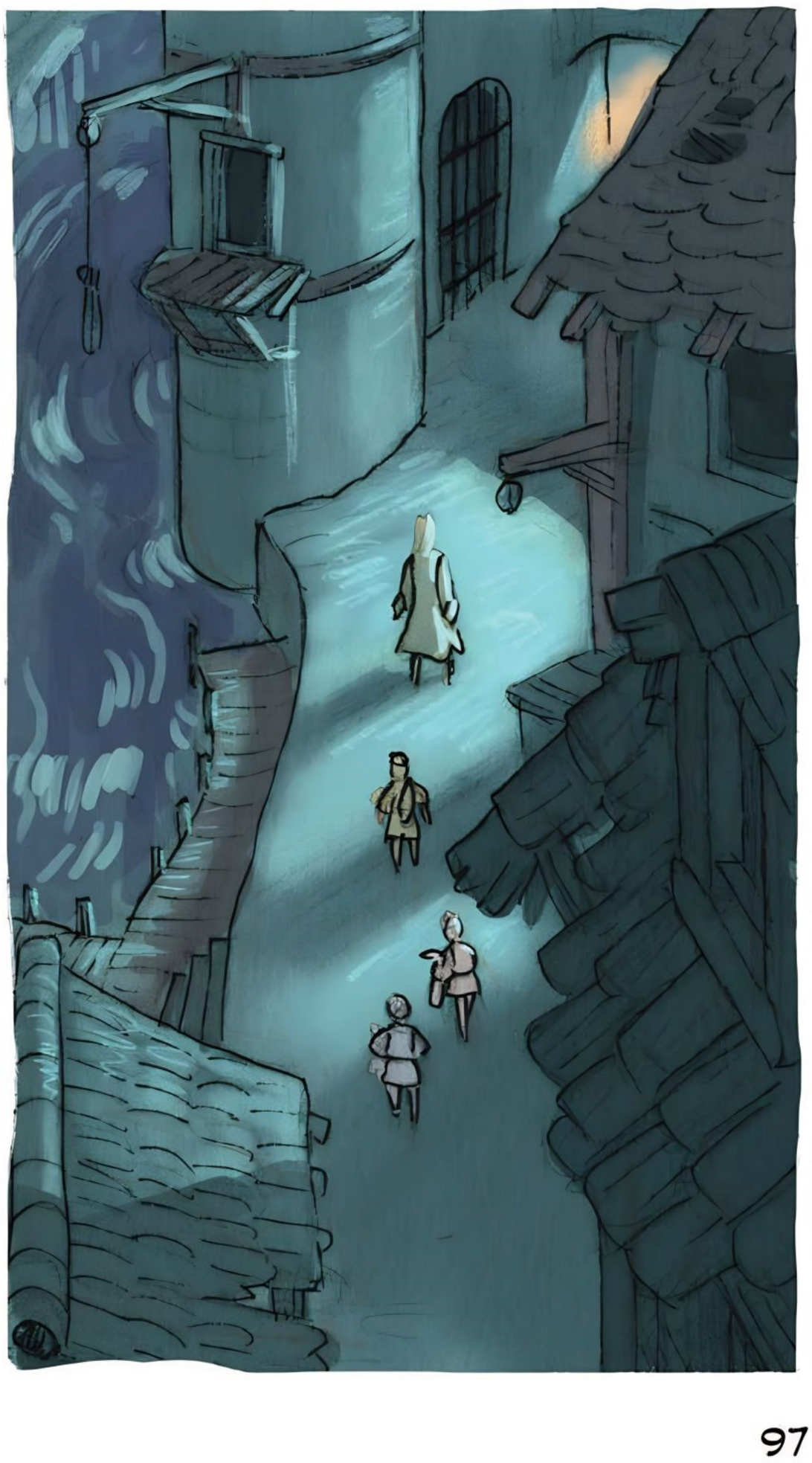
FRRP

FRRRP

SNIFF SNIFF RRRR

RIP

PHEW!



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HARD TO BELIEVE THERE'S A PRINCE IN THERE.

A PRINCE, THREE LORDS, AND ALL THEIR SHINY TRAPPINGS!

TOSKA'S INSIDE. HE'LL OPEN THE WINDOW FOR YOU.

IS HE JOINING THE GANG?

NOT THAT ONE, KIT. YOU DON'T WANT THAT ONE.

HOW COME?

HE'S A BAD SEED.

LIKE KOLYA?

HA!

KOLYA'S JUST A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING!

AND NO WONDER! A CAITSITH WITHOUT A TAIL—IT'S JUST NOT RIGHT!

NO, TOSKA, HE'S...

LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY— YOU KNOW HOW BARON GRIM HAS HIS BOOK OF CATS?

AND HOW EVERYONE WHOSE NAME IS IN IT BELONGS TO HIM?

WELL, THIS ONE, HE LET GET AWAY. AND HE WAS GLAD OF IT.

BUT YOU LET KOLYA GET AWAY.

CHASED HIM AWAY EVEN.

BARON GRIM WON'T BE GLAD ABOUT THAT.

KOLYA'LL BE BACK! I'M JUST TEACHING HIM A LESSON.

DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT!

WHAT I'M SAYING IS TOSKA'S NOT JOINING THE GANG *OR* SHARING IN THE LOOT.

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN, SANYO. YOU GOT THE NET?

YEAH, BUT...

NO BUTS! WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL, YOU THROW IT ON HIM, AND I'LL PUSH HIM IN THE WATER.

HE'LL SINK LIKE A STONE!

AND DON'T HESITATE!

YOU DON'T WANT HIM GETTING HIS PAWS ON YOU OR—

HARK!

!!!

RUN, KITTENS.

EEYAAH!

CRACK

TAP TAP TAP TAP

TADAP

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

FLT

!

I'VE BEEN MAKING MYSELF USEFUL.

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THESE ARE...!

HOW DID YOU...?

FLUMP

WELL...THESE WILL HELP IF SOMETHING UNEXPECTED COMES UP IN THE HUNT.

GOOD WORK, IN ANY CASE.

I SAVED YOU SOME MUTTON. YOU OUGHT TO BE HUNGRY.

NO THANKS.

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I'VE EATEN.

...

OH!

TSK! JUNKY STUFF, THIS TWINE.

BUT I SHOULD MEND IT. WOULDN'T WANT TO LOSE MY AMULET DOWN THERE!

SUN'S UP! LET'S GO!

YAWN

STRETCH

FIVE MORE MINUTES, PLEASE...

NO TIME TO WASTE!

I ALREADY ATE MY BREAKFAST.

GLOMP

BLINK BLINK

THIS IS BREAKFAST? IT'S AWFUL SMALL!

WE NEED TO RATION THE REST.

WE'LL GET GOING AFTER I'M DONE WASHING AT THE STREAM.

NO PEEKING!

NO WORRIES.

CRUNCH MUNCH MUNCH MUNCH

HEY, LEMME HAVE THE REST OF YOURS.

I DON'T THINK SO.

LEADERS GET DOUBLE RATIONS. GIMME!

GET OFF!

BING

YOU'VE ANGERED ME.

SO?

SO YOU FORGET THAT I COMMAND A MONSTER.

SNAP

RUF?

HEY, WAIT!

YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE TO GROVEL! NOW FEEL MY WRATH!

BYRON, ATTACK!

HRF?

ATTACK! ATTACK!

RFF?

RFF?

OVER *HERE*, BONE BRAIN!

WAG WAG

NO, NOT *ME!* HIM! HIM!

PFF...

HA HA HA HA HAHA HA HA!

CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP

YAARGH!

BYRON! COME HERE!

WAG WAG

HA HA! HA!

CRAWL CRAWL

GIVE IT TO ME.

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT, HUH?

GIVE IT TO ME...

...OR I'LL TELL SURI ABOUT YOUR LITTLE SECRET.

DO DOM

I—I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

OH, BUT I THINK YOU *DO!*

WASN'T IT YOUR FUZZY EARS I SAW SNEAKING AROUND LAST NIGHT?

SUUUURI!

WHAT?

C'MERE! I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOUUU!

OKAY.

OKAY! TAKE IT!

WHAT IS IT, CAGLIO?

I'M STILL HUNGRY.

THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED TO TELL ME?!

I SAID WE NEED TO SAVE THE REST!

ZZZZ

MAYBE SOMEONE WOULDN'T MIND *SHARING* WITH THEIR DEAR LEADER?

OH, DON'T BE—

AH, CHEERS!

ARE YOU SURE, KOLYA? YOU DON'T HAVE TO, YOU KNOW.

BUT HE *WANTS* TO! TELL HER, YOU!

IT'S FINE. I'M NOT THAT HUNGRY.

OKAY...SO, YOU'RE ALL SET TO GO?

YOU BETCHA!

CHOMP CHOMP

AT LEAST THOSE TWO ARE GETTING ALONG NOW!

NEE NER

HA HA HA

NYOM NYOM

...I THINK?

SIGH

THIS WILL BE A LOT EASIER WHEN WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT FOOD!

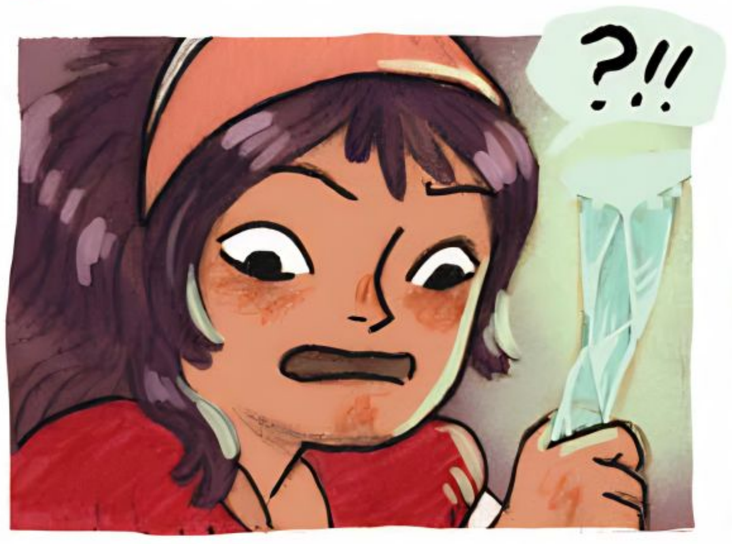
YOU CAN'T BRING A TABLE ON A CAVE ADVENTURE, BYRON!

UGH, FINE!
BUT I'LL STRAP IT TO YOUR BACK, AT LEAST.

OKAY, LET'S GO!

YOU'RE SURE WE DON'T NEED TORCHES?
NO, LOOK!

CRYSTAL MUSHROOMS?


?!!

LET'S GO BACK. WE TRIED. LET'S GO BACK.

SHUSH!

NUDGE

SHRK

WAP

SHHRRRRRRRK

SHHRRK

AAAH!

EEEEK!

SHTOMVVK

CLONK

CLONK

IT'S JUST A SHELL. IT'S EMPTY.

KRK KRAK

KRRRRRR KRAK KRRRK

KRRRSHHHH

MAYBE MOLE KINGS SHED THEIR CARAPACE, LIKE CRAYFISH.

AND IF THEY DO, THEY'LL HIDE WHILE THEIR ARMOR HARDENS.

GREAT!

BUT THAT ALSO MEANS THAT WHEN WE SEE IT NEXT, IT MIGHT BE EVEN BIGGER.

NOT GREAT.

LET'S HURRY, THEN. HERE—THERE'S A TUNNEL WE CAN USE TO GET OUT.

THIS TUNNEL IS TOO SMALL FOR BYRON.

HMM, YOU'RE RIGHT.

BUT IF SOMEONE GOT UP TO THE LEDGE, THEY COULD HELP BYRON CLIMB OUT.

I KNOW!

WHY DON'T YOU AND I GO UP TOGETHER AND—

SLAP

THAT'S A ***GREAT*** IDEA, KOLYA!

LET'S TEAM UP, YOU AND ME!

YOU WANT TO SPLIT UP? I DON'T THINK THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.

LIKE KOLYA SAID, WE'LL GET UP THERE AND PULL BYRON OUT! EASY-PEASY!

WELL...I GUESS THAT'S A PLAN.

SEE YA SOON!

YOU DIDN'T THINK I'D LET YOU GET AWAY WITH THAT, DID YOU?

SURI'S MY FRIEND.

HMPF.

BUT SAY, IF YOU'RE NOT HAPPY WITH OUR PRESENT ARRANGEMENT, I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU...

ARRR HARRR

SHEESH, THEY'RE TAKING THEIR TIME!

LICK LICK

!

HERE, BYRON! THE LEDGE MIGHT BE LOW ENOUGH THAT YOU COULD JUMP!

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JUMP, BYRON!
JUMP! JUMP!

OOF!

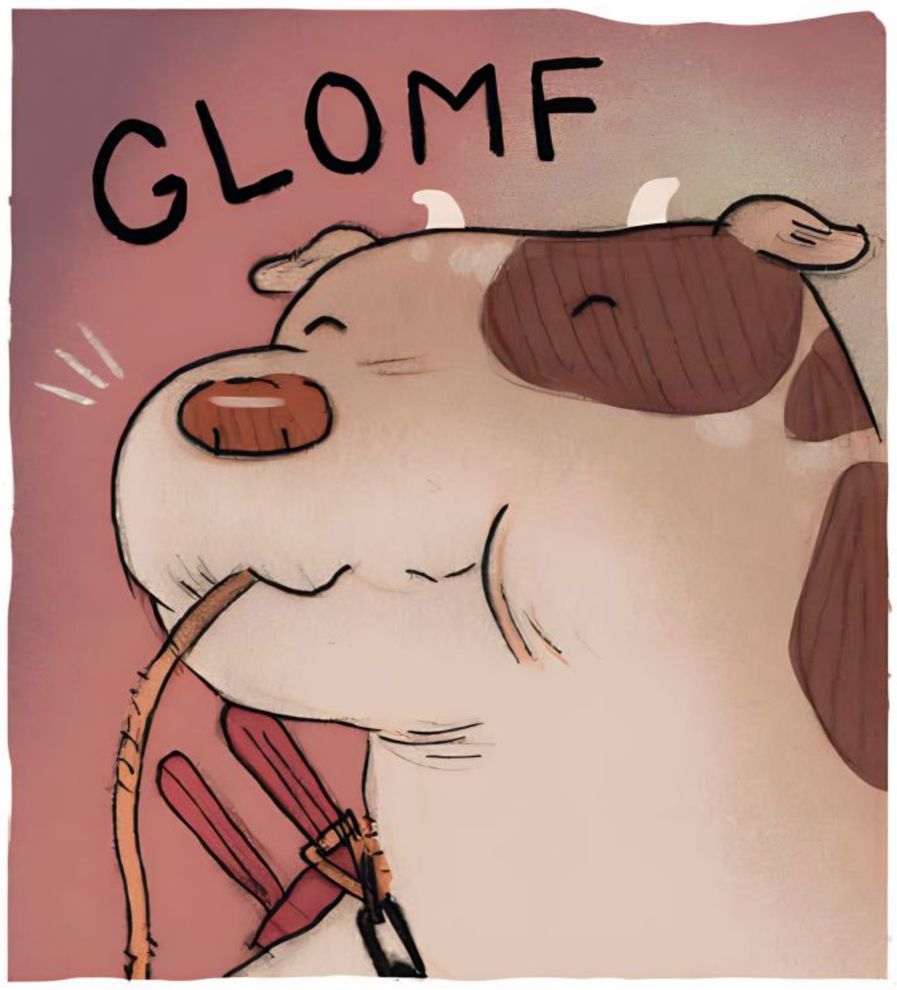
OKAY, ALMOST!

GRUNT LET'S TRY ANOTHER WAY.

WSH
WSH
WSH

JUMP!

SWSHHH



YOU KNOW, BYRON, THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T GET.

THE MOLE KING IS SO BIG...

...SO WHY ARE THESE TUNNELS SO SMALL?

TAPATAPATAP

KOLYA? CAGLIO?

TAPATAPATAP TAPATAPTAP TAPATAPATAP

I KNEW WE SHOULDN'T HAVE SPLIT UP!

I MEAN, BYRON'S LIKE A BULL IN A GLASS SHOP. YOU CAN'T TAKE HIM ANYWHERE!

AND SURI'S ALWAYS QUESTIONING MY ORDERS—WE'RE BETTER OFF DOING THIS OURSELVES, RIGHT?

YEAH. RIGHT.

STILL SULKING?

I TOLD YOU—TAKE ME TO THE TREASURE, AND I'LL LET YOU PILFER HER PURSE.

SOME FRIEND YOU ARE.

WHAT WAS THAT?

NOTHING.

LISTEN, YOU, LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE A TEAM NOW!

WE BOTH WANT SOMETHING AND WE HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER!

?!

WHY'D YOU STOP?

THIS...IS THE TREASURE ROOM.

THIS? CAN'T BE!

THERE'S NOTHING HERE!

AND THROUGH HERE IS THE ROOM WHERE I FOUND THAT STUPID TABLE.

HOW? IT'S COMPLETELY BLOCKED!

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO WEASEL OUT...

WILL YOU SHUT UP? THE TREASURE WAS HERE!

OH!

IT MUST HAVE EMPTIED THROUGH THAT HOLE!

GULP

YOU CHECK IT OUT, AND I'LL GUARD THE ENTRANCE.

WHAT'S THAT, *TEAM* LEADER? WE'LL GO TOGETH—

?!!

DIG?

DIG?

SQUAWK!

SCREEK!!!

WHAT THE—?!

THIS HOLE'S OCCUPIED! OUR MISTAKE! WE'LL TAKE THE NEXT ONE!

FWSH

KACHINK

SCREEEK!!!
SQUAWK!
?!
SCRRTCH

YOU TOOK THE WRONG TUNNEL!

I DIDN'T! IT MUST'VE CAVED IN!

SCREEEK!

SCREEK! SQUAWK!

DON'T WORRY. I HAVE A PLAN.

REALLY?

KEEP IT BUSY. I'LL GO FOR HELP.

YOU LITTLE—!!!

ZIP

SCREEK!

MRRAW

HISSS!

SCREEEK!

AWOOO.

NO!

AND I MEAN IT! YOU BARELY FIT IN THESE TUNNELS AS IT IS!

THE TABLE *HAS* TO STAY HERE!

WE'LL GET IT ON THE WAY BACK, I PROMISE!

TKT

BOWOWOWOWOW!

HGN!

BOWOWOWOW!!!

BYRON! STOP!

BYRON!

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HUFF
HUFF

BOW WOW WOW!!

BUMP

EEP!

BOW WOW BOW WOW WOW

OOF.
BYRON?

BOW WOW
BOW BOW
WOW

BY—?

KICK

OW, OW,
OW!

DIG?

DIG DUG.

DIG?

STEP

DIG?

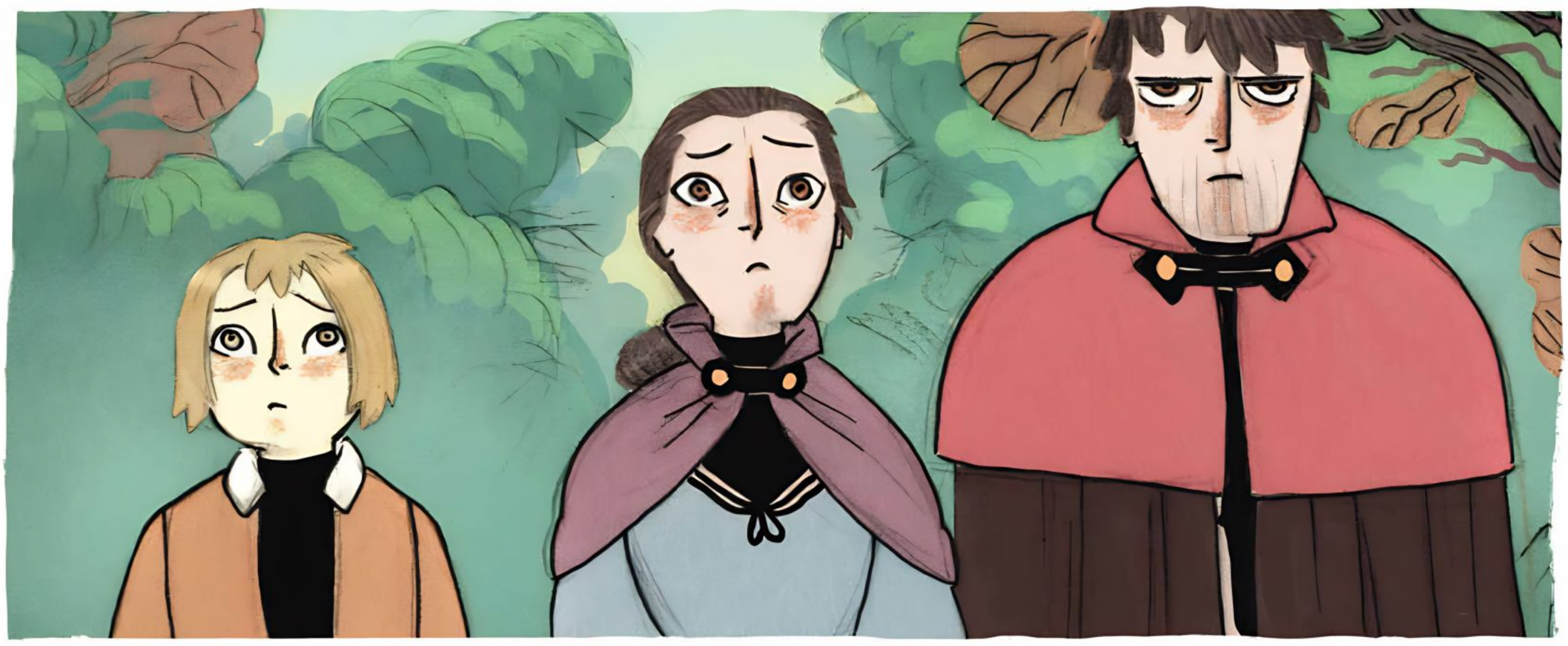
DIG DUG.

DIG DUG.

DIG DUG.

EEP!

SCREEEEEEEK!!!
AAAH! SOMEBODY HELP!



I HAVE TO SAY...THIS IS UNEXPECTED.

THE SCENT OF THAT MONSTER AND THE GIRL DEFINITELY LEADS HERE, THOUGH.

I TRACKED IT DOWN FROM THAT CAMPSITE!

HMMM. BUT THERE'S A STRONGER SCENT, SOMETHING—

THAT WASN'T THE DEAL!

YOUR DISPLEASURE IS NOTED. NOW PLEASE DO AS HIS HIGHNESS COMMANDS!

YOU'RE LEADING US INTO THE MOUNTAIN! WE WERE TOLD THIS WAS A HUNT!

YEAH YEAH

IT *IS* A HUNT. JUST...UNDERGROUND AND WITH LOTS OF DIGGING.

OOOH!

BOO!

THE WHOLE REASON WE'RE ASKING FOR WORK FROM HIS *HIGH-AND-MIGHTINESS* IS THAT WE *CAN'T* GO IN THE MOUNTAIN!

YEAH!

HOW *DARE* YOU! HIS HIGHNESS IS—!

ENOUGH!

WE'RE NOT GOING.

WE'VE ALL LOST SOMEONE DOWN IN THE MINES.

THE TUNNELS SHIFT AND FILL WHEN WE'RE NOT LOOKING.

IT'S A SIGN. THE MOUNTAIN DOESN'T WANT US ANYMORE.

BUT YOU'VE ACCEPTED THE PRINCE'S COIN! YOU *MUST* GO!

YEAH?

WHICH ONE OF YOU'S GONNA MAKE US?

CITIZENS OF TANCREDI, YOU'VE BEEN *FOOLED!*

HUH?

WHAT?

THE MOUNTAIN DIDN'T TAKE YOUR PEOPLE!

THE MONSTER DID.

SEE THE BROKEN TREES? THE CLAW MARKS ON THE GROUND?

THE MONSTER WE HUNT HIDES IN THIS MOUNTAIN. THE SAME MOUNTAIN WHERE YOUR PEOPLE VANISHED!

WHAT MORE PROOF DO YOU NEED?

THAT WAS THREE YEARS AGO. IF THERE'D BEEN A MONSTER HERE ALL THIS TIME...

THREE YEARS? AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN THIS MOUNTAIN?

THREE GENERATIONS? THREE CENTURIES?

HASN'T IT PROVIDED THE ROOFS OVER YOUR HEADS? BOUGHT THE FOOD ON YOUR TABLES?

SHE'S RIIIGHT!

AND NOW, AFTER *ALL* THIS TIME, THE MOUNTAIN WOULD TURN ITS BACK ON YOU?

NO! A MONSTER IS BEHIND THIS. AND A MONSTER WILL PAY FOR IT!

THE PRINCE LEADS YOU INTO THE MOUNTAIN NOT AS MINERS, BUT AS HUNTERS.

GO! AVENGE YOUR PEOPLE. RECLAIM YOUR MOUNTAIN!

YEAAAH!

TAK TAK TAK

FINALLY.

TAK
TAK
TAK
WHO KNOWS WHAT WE'LL FIND IN THERE.
IT WON'T BE JUST THAT GIRL AND HER MONSTER, THAT'S FOR SURE.
WE MIGHT WANT TO HANG BACK.
HUFF
HUFF
HAHH.
HAHH.
HAAAHH!
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG

DRIP

DRIP DRIP DRIP

DRIP DRIP DROP

SPLASH!

SPLASH SPLASH

SPLASH SPLASH SPLASH

SPLISH
SPLASH
SPLASH

K-KOLYA?

?!

IS THAT YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

NOTHING! JUST...THIRSTY.

ARE YOU ALONE?

BYRON RAN OFF AFTER SOMETHING! DON'T TELL ME CAGLIO'S GONE, TOO?!

YEAH. WE GOT SEPARATED.

OOOOH! I ***KNEW*** WE SHOULDN'T HAVE SPLIT UP!

THE MOLE KING'S NOT THE ONLY MONSTER DOWN HERE!

COME ON!

BYRON MIGHT LOOK TOUGH, BUT REALLY HE'S A BIG BABY. WE HAVE TO FIND HIM BEFORE HE—

SURI...

...OVER HERE. I THINK I HEAR HIM.

DOWN THERE?!

BYRON?

BYRON?!

DRIP

DRIP

DROP

I DONT HEAR ANYTHING.

IT WAS LIKE A WHIMPER. MAYBE HE'S HURT.

OH NO!

I COULD BE WRONG, BUT...

...WHY DON'T YOU GO DOWN AND HAVE A LOOK?

GULP

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N-NOT TOO FAST, OKAY?

DON'T WORRY.

I'VE GOT YOU.

NCH NCH NCH

NCH NCH

EASY, EASY...

DRIP DRIP DRIP

EAS— EEEEEEE!

VI I I OOU

AAAH! TOO FAST! TOO FAST!

TWANG

UGH!

WHOOSH

WHOOSH

KAKLINK

SCREEK!

SCREEK!

SQUAWK!

ULP! I DON'T THINK BYRON'S DOWN HERE!

KOLYA?

HUP! HMPF!

CRUNCH

CRACK

SCREEK!

SCRAK!

CRACK

KOLYA, *HUFF* ARE YOU OKAY? *HUFF* ARE YOU—

HEY!!!

WHAT'S ***WRONG*** WITH YOU?!

YOU LEAVE ME DANGLING DOWN THERE, AND NOW YOU'RE GOING THROUGH MY STUFF?!

IT'S NOT HERE! YOU HAVE IT ON YOU, DON'T YOU?

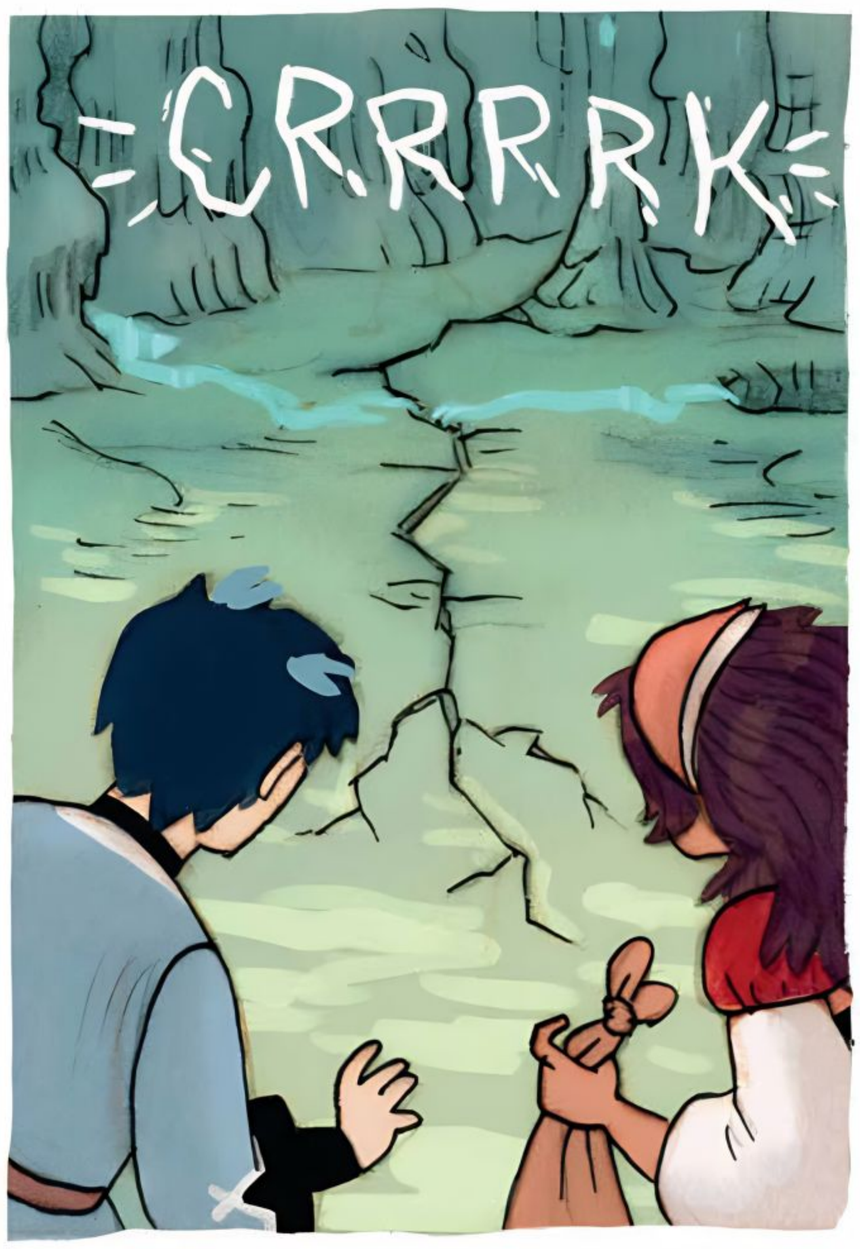
HUH? I HAVE WHAT ON ME?

I'M SORRY, BUT I NEED IT.

CRRK CRRRK

CRR RRK
WHAT'S THAT?

CRACK
CRUNCH
CRUNCH


CRRRRK

CRAAAACK

EEEE!

AAAH!

ARE... ARE YOU OKAY?

!!!

S-SORT OF!

IF WE SWING, CAN YOU GRAB THAT LEDGE OVER THERE?

WHERE?

EEK! DON'T LOOK UP!

AAAH! DON'T KICK YOUR FEET!

THE LEDGE TO YOUR LEFT!

UH, YEAH! I CAN MAKE THAT!

SWISH

SWOOSH

PHEW!

OH!

I CAN SEE MY THINGS! THEY'RE NOT TOO FAR OFF.

HUP!

H-HEY, WAIT!

DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD—

FIND MY THINGS THAT YOU THREW EVERYWHERE?

YES, I THINK WE SHOULD!

HERE'S MY BAG.

AND MY **BOOK!** OH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO IF I LOST IT!

TSK! MY STICK IS BROKEN. AND THE FOOD IS ALL SMOOSHED!

WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR?!

UH...

=SHRRRRRRK=

RKK

DIG?

=SHRK=

DIG DUG.

SHHRK

DIG?

DIG...
DUG?

SNK

SHHRK

DIG?

DIG DUG.

UH, DIG DUG!

SHRK

DIG?

SHRK

DIG DUG.

SHRRK

DIG?

DIG DUG.

DIG DUG

CLONNNNG
CLONNNG

SCREEK!!!
CRACK
CRUNCH
CRACK

CLONG
THAT'S THE BELL I HEARD BEFORE.

SHH.

CRUNCH
IF WE DON'T PROVOKE THEM, I THINK THEY'LL LEAVE US ALONE.
CRACK
CRACK
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

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?

LOOKS LIKE A WAY UP.

ONE OF THEM IS STARING AT US.

JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN.

!!!

SHRR. SHRRR.

SURI! STOP!

SHH! SO LONG AS WE DON'T—

SCREEEEK!!!

YIIII!

SCREEK!

WHY IS IT MAD AT US?!

WE MET EARLIER!

SQUAWK!
SHRK
SHRK
SHRK
HMPH!
!!!
LET'S JUMP ON THREE. ONE, TWO—
NO!
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN MAKE THAT!

SCREEEK!

SHRK

SHRK

Y-YOU GO. MAYBE I CAN FIGHT—

?

AAAAAAAAH!!!

TSHFF

THUD

OOF!

WHOMP

UGH!

OWWW!

SCREEEK!!!
SCRAAAAK!!!

GRRR!

GET OUT OF HERE!
GO ON!

TAK
TAK

YOU LIKE THAT?! HAVE SOME MORE!

YOU CAN STOP. IT'S LEAVING.

LOUSY MONSTER.

TAK

CRACK

CRACKA
CRRACK

SLAP

HGN!

CRACK
CRACK
CRACK

CRMB
CRRK

HRRRG!

TAKA
TAKA
TAKA

UM...SORRY ABOUT YOUR STUFF.

HEH. THAT'S OKAY! BETTER MY BAG THAN US, HUH?

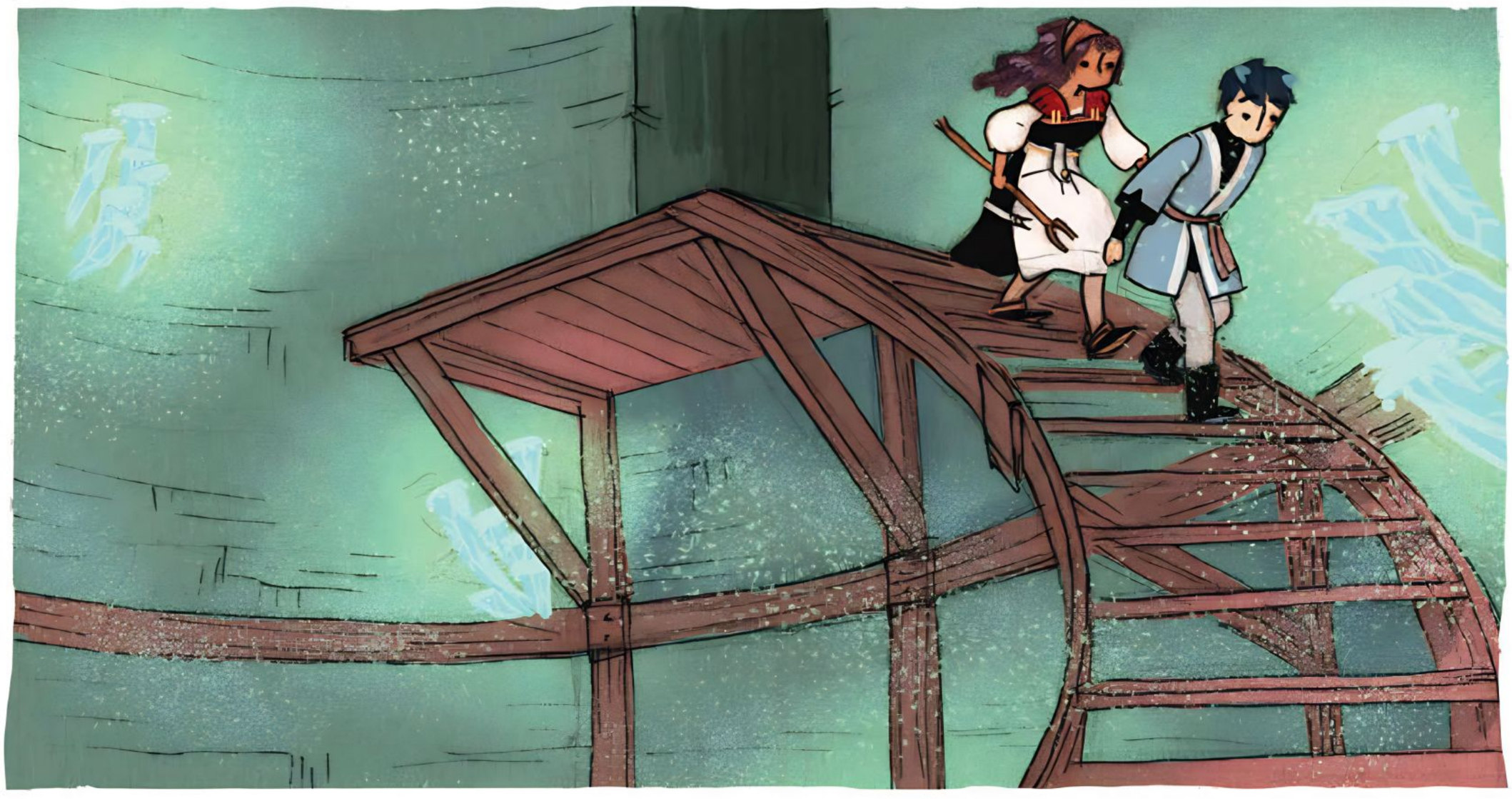
AND, HEY, MAYBE WE'LL FIND IT AGAIN!

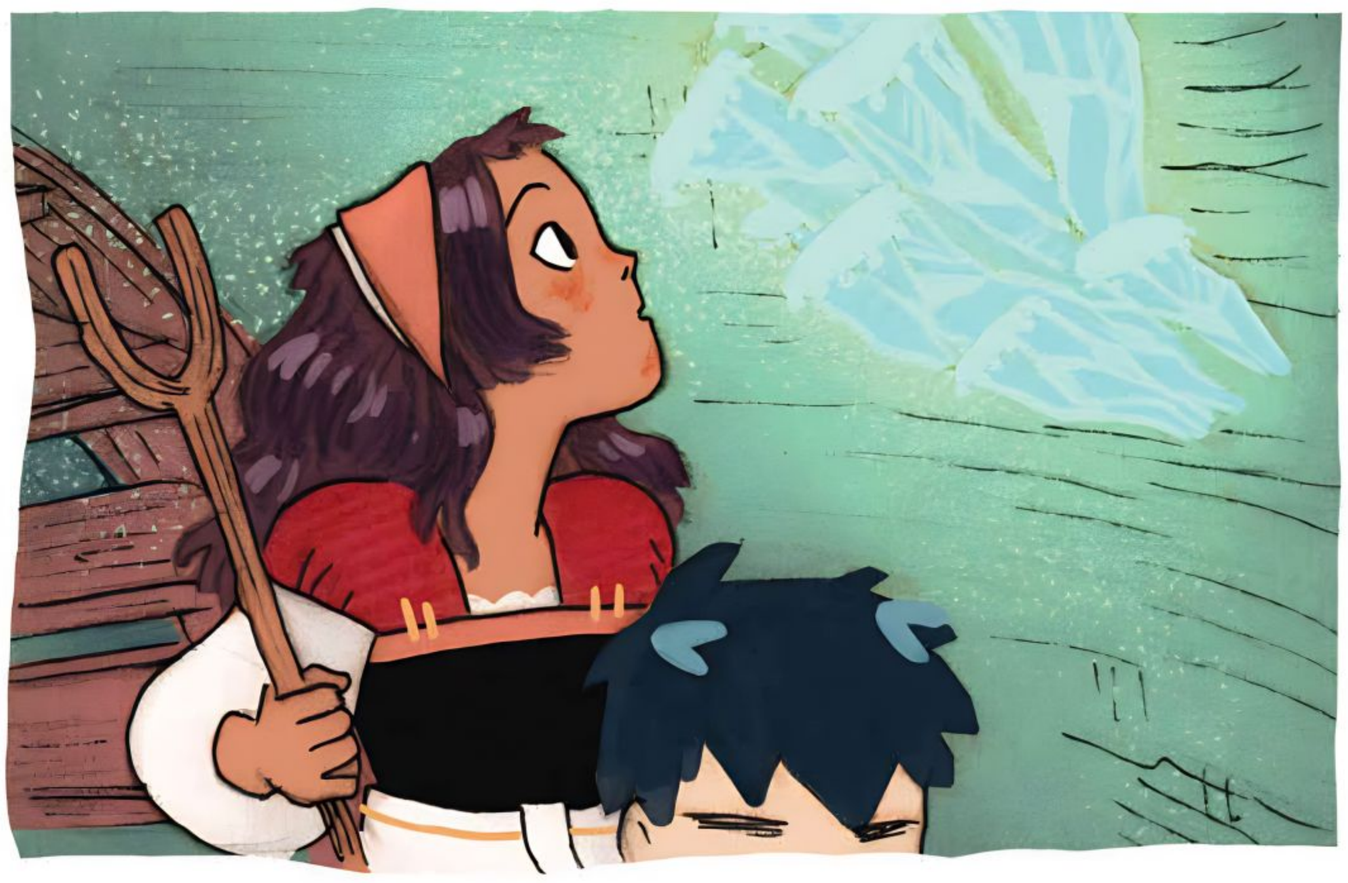
LET'S SEE WHERE THIS LEADS.

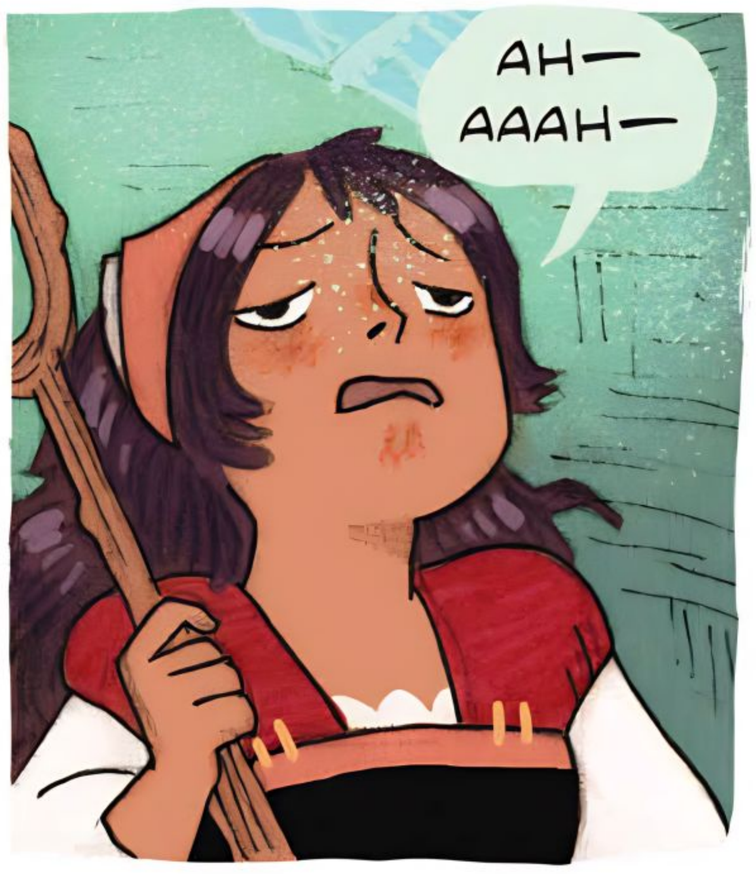
THIS LOOKS LIKE AN OLD MINE SHAFT.

SQUEAK
SQUEAK

I CAN GO FIRST IF YOU WANT.






AH—
AAAH—

TCHAA!

CAREFUL. THE SPORES WILL MAKE YOU DIZZY IF YOU BREATHE IN TOO MUCH.

YOU KNOW THESE MUSHROOMS? I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE.

WE HAVE THEM IN BOREA. WE CALL THEM LANTERN NIGHTCAPS.

AH, YOU ***ARE*** FROM UP NORTH! I THOUGHT YOUR CLOTHES LOOKED NORTHERN.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN SURN?

OH, UM...AT MY OLD JOB WE TRAVELED AROUND A LOT.

LIFTING THINGS?

...YEP.

WHEN WE GET THE TREASURE, WILL YOU GO BACK TO BOREA?

I DUNNO, I...

I HAVEN'T DECIDED WHAT I'M GOING TO DO YET.

THIS IS GOING TO SOUND WEIRD, BUT...I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN SO HAPPY TO SEE STAIRS!

HEH. I KNOW, RIGHT? AFTER ALL THAT CLAMBERING...

...THIS IS ALMOST NICE.

SHOVE

?!!

AAAAA!!!

AAAAA!!!

SPLASH

GLUB
GLUB

SPLASH
GASP

HCK!
HLP!

KOFF! KOFF!
KOFF!
KAFF!
KAFF!

THE SPORES—KOFF! DON'T BREATHE TOO DEEP! KOFF! KOFF!
I CAN'T BREATHE AT ALL!!! KAFF! KAFF!

GET TO THE STAIRS! KAFF!

KAFF!

KOFF! KOFF!

KAFF. *HUFF*

WOBBLE

HUFF *HUFF*

FLUMP

TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

TAK TAK

?

HEY—BIG FELLA! CAN YOU GIVE ME A HAND?

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SURE...

YANK

DON'T. YOU. DARE.

BACK. WITH MOUSKA.

ACK! YAAAH!

WHAT IS IT?!

SOMETHING DUCKED INTO THAT HOLE!

I THINK IT WAS THE MONSTER!

DON'T WORRY.

THE MONSTER WE SEEK IS FAR TOO BIG TO FIT INTO THAT TUNNEL.

ARE *YOU* REASSURED BY THAT?

NOPE.

KEEP DIGGING!

?!

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OH!

KOLYA?

KOLYA?!

MMM...FIVE MORE MINUTES, PLEASE.

WAKE UP!

HUH?!

WHAT?!

WE... WE MADE IT! WE'RE ALIVE!

LET'S GET GOING!

GLADLY!

I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER GET OUT OF THAT—!

?!

UH, SURI? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

LOOKING FOR THE WAY IN.

YOU WANT TO GO *BACK*?!

THERE'S GOTTA BE A HIDDEN TUNNEL.

THERE'S NO POINT IN GOING BACK!

I WENT TO THE TREASURE ROOM MYSELF—IT WAS EMPTY!

AND LOOK! YOU EVEN HAVE YOUR BAG!

AHA! HERE!

HURRRG! GIVE ME A HAND!

NO WAY!

BYRON AND CAGLIO ARE STILL DOWN THERE!

BYRON PROBABLY RAN OUT ALREADY! YOU SAID YOURSELF HE WAS A BABY.

AND CAGLIO'S NO FRIEND OF YOURS. HE'S ONLY LOOKING OUT FOR HIMSELF!

OH, AND ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING ***WE*** SHOULD DO?

JUST LOOK OUT FOR OURSELVES?

WE'RE LUCKY WE MADE IT OUT OF THERE AT ALL!

WE DIDN'T ***MAKE*** IT OUT. *HUFF* SOMETHING ***THREW*** US OUT!

MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE THAT AS A HINT?

HUFF *HUFF*

DON'T FEEL BAD, OKAY?

IN TOWN MAYBE THEY COULD—

STAND BACK.

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I'M GOING TO BLAST IT OPEN!

...BLAST IT?

I NEVER TOLD YOU BEFORE, BUT MY DRAGON TOOTH GRANTS ME A POWERFUL MAGIC.

I KNOW IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE—

NO, NO! MAKES PERFECT SENSE.

I'LL, UH... WAIT HERE.

THINK OF NOTHING. NOTHING. HRRM.

MYAAH!

SWSHH

MRRR—OPEN!

SWSH

SWSH

BEGONE!

SWSH

EXPLODE!

HUFF
SNIFF

COME ON. LET'S GO BACK TO—

GET OUT OF MY WAY!

FINE! SUIT YOURSELF!

GET OUT OF MY WAY!

I DID!

GET OUT OF MY WAY!

!!!

THE TWINE! SHE CAN USE THE...

GET OUT OF MY WAY!

FWSHHHH

KRAKA

TAKA

TIK

HEY! WAIT!

THIS IS STILL A DUMB IDEA! DO YOU WANT TO DIE THAT BADLY?!

NO, I WANT TO GO FIND MY FRIENDS!

AND IF YOU DON'T COUNT YOURSELF AMONG THEM, THEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME!

OH, REALLY NICE!

WELL, I'M NOT COMING, YOU HEAR?!

YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!

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CLONG
CLONNG
THE BELL...
TAGADAGADAGADAGAP
SCREEK!
SQUAWK!
?!
CRACK
CRUNCH
CRACK
CRUNCH
GULP
CRACK
CRACK
CRUNCH

SNIFF THEN I'LL GET THE TREASURE.

SNIFF AND I'LL BUY A CASTLE AND A BIG GOLD THRONE. AND KOLYA'LL BE MY SERVANT. *SNIFF*

AND SURI WILL BE THERE, TOO, AND SHE'LL SAY, "OH, CAGLIO, TELL US AGAIN HOW YOU BEAT THE MOLE KING AND SAVED US ALL!"

AND I'LL SAY, "ANOTHER TIME." *SNIFF* "NOW FINISH MY PORTRAIT."

AHEM!

SURI!

BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU! I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU.

UH-HUH.

WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

BYRON AND I GOT SEPARATED. KOLYA...LEFT.

HE JUST *LEFT*?! WHO DOES THAT?!

CRK

DO YOU KNOW WHERE BYRON IS?

NO, BUT HE'S CLOSE. I HEARD HIM EARLIER.

CRK CRNK

HMPH! IT'S RUSTED SHUT!

CRNK CRNK

WHO?

THE MOLE QUEEN!

WHAT?!

LEAVE IT! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE *SHE* GETS BACK.

NOT AS BIG AS THE KING, BUT YOU DON'T WANNA GET ON HER BAD SIDE.

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I KNOW WHERE TO GO FROM HERE! GO LEFT, THEN RIGHT!

I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHERE BYRON WAS.

I DON'T!

BUT I KNOW WHERE THE TREASURE IS!

HNNG!

WOOO...

AWOOOOOOOO...

BYRON!

GNAAA!

YOU POOR THING!!!

I'LL GET YOU OUT OF THERE!

BYRON... YOU'RE HURT!

WOOOWOODOO...

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?!

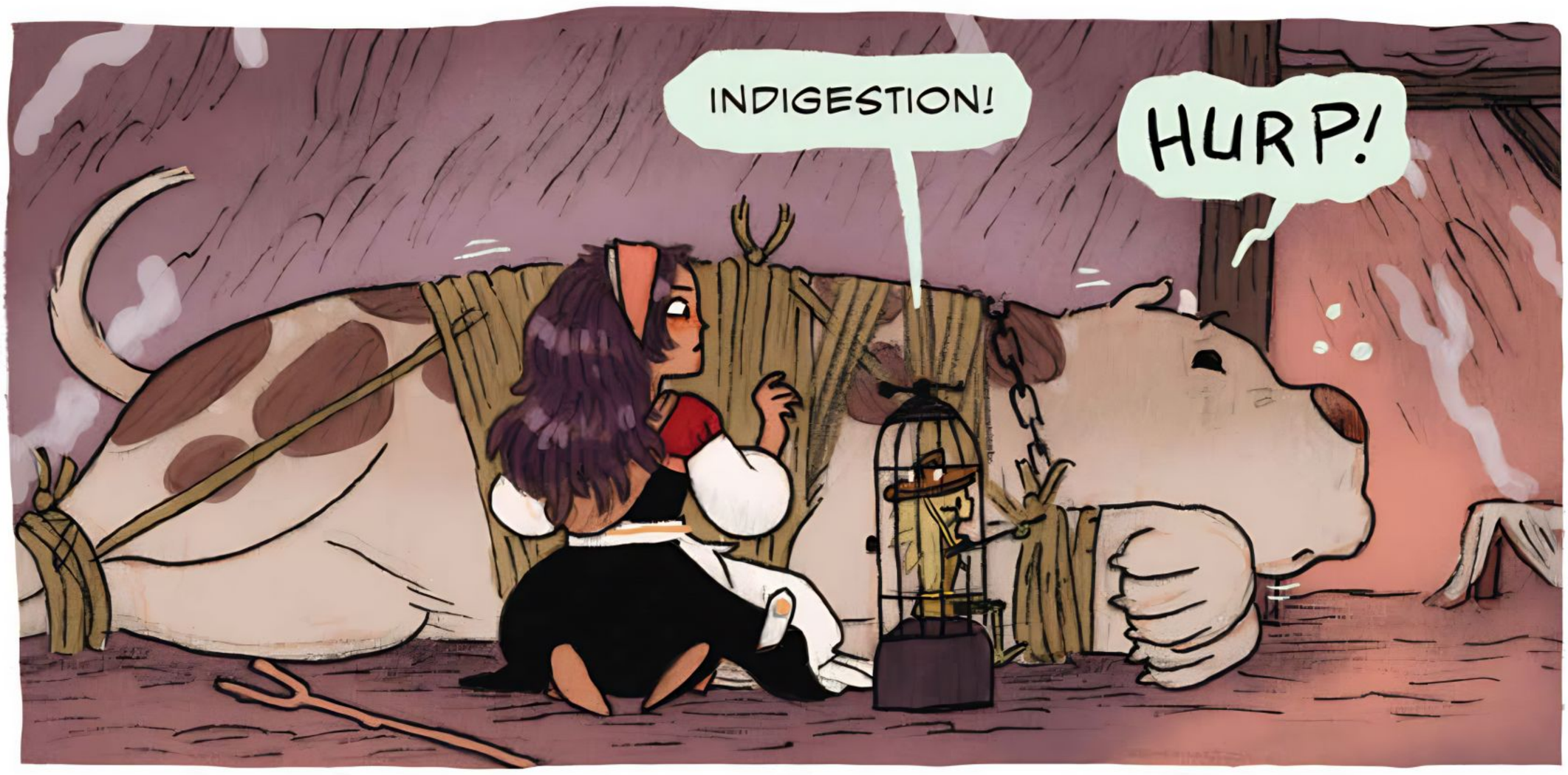
WAIT! I KNOW WHAT'S WRONG!

WHAT?

I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE!

WHAT? WHAT IS IT?!

HE'S GOT—


INDIGESTION!
HURP!

BRACE YOURSELF, IT'S GONNA SMELL LIKE A TANNERY SOON.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN EATING?!

INDIGESTION OR NOT, WE HAVE TO GO BEFORE—

FWSH

WE'RE CAUGHT!

THAT'S IT. WE CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER.

NEVER MIND. WE HAVE OTHER MEANS.

ROLL OUT THE CANNON!

FIRE!

KABOOM

POW

RELOAD!

BRRRMMMMBRRRR

WE BEG YOU, MOLE QUEEN, HAVE MERCY!

I TOLD YOU— STOP CALLING ME THAT!

I JUST CAME BACK FOR MY FRIENDS.

WE CAN SHOW OURSELVES OUT!

I TRIED TO BE NICE. NOW YOU'VE FOUND THE TREASURE—YOU HAVE TO STAY HERE.

FOR HOW LONG?

AS LONG AS I SAY!

WE'RE SORRY. WE ONLY WANTED THE TREASURE SO WE COULD BUY FOOD.

WE'RE ON A JOURNEY TO THE MONSTER'S CRADLE AND—

SNORT THAT'S A NEW ONE.

BUT...WE'RE ALSO HAPPY TO WORK!

I'M SURI—NICE TO MEET YOU! I'M A MONSTER TAMER, SO IF YOU NEED A HAND WITH THOSE MOLE CREATURES—

NO, I DON'T!

AND I WON'T HEAR ANOTHER THING ABOUT IT!

TOLD YOU NOT TO GET ON HER BAD SIDE!

ULP!

I CAN ALSO WASH WINDOWS, SHEAR SHEEP—

"MONSTER TAMER," HUH?

HOW OLD ARE YOU, ANYWAY? TEN?

TWELVE!

SNORT S'CUSE ME, ***TWELVE!*** AND YOU'RE HUNTING TREASURE WITH A WEIRD-LOOKING BABY—

HEY! AN IMP!

AND SOME HULKING BULL BEAST—

HE'S JUST A BIG DOG!

WHATEVER! DON'T YOU THINK YOUR FAMILY'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU?!

I DON'T KNOW.

THEY'RE WHO I'M TRYING TO FIND.

OH.

SORRY.

I DON'T REMEMBER MY PARENTS...

ALL I KNOW IS THAT I WAS BORN OUTSIDE THE VALLEY, IN THE LAND OF MONSTERS.

AND THAT I WAS BROUGHT HERE IN THE ARMS OF A DRAGON.

NO ONE EVER BELIEVES ME, THOUGH...

NO WONDER. SOUNDS KINDA FAR-FETCHED.

I BELIEVE YOU.

YOU DO?!

SURE.

IF YOU'D ASKED ME THREE YEARS AGO, I PROBABLY WOULDA SAID YOU WERE OFF YOUR BOULDER.

BUT AFTER SO MUCH TIME ALONE WITH THE...MOLE CREATURES, AS YOU CALL THEM, I'M READY TO BELIEVE A LOT OF THINGS.

YOU ARE...A HUMAN, RIGHT?

WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE?!

AND YOU'VE BEEN HERE ALONE FOR THREE YEARS?

GIVE OR TAKE, YES.

BUT WHY? IT MUST BE—

LOOK, KID, I'M AFRAID WE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS, SO WHY DON'T YOU—

WHUMP

SPLASH

KOLYA!

YOU AGAIN?!

FWSH

RRR!
I'VE HAD IT WITH
YOU KIDS!

YANK

THUD

QUICK!
UNTIE ME!

WE'RE GONNA HAVE A VERY SERIOUS CHAT, YOU AND ME!

SLIP

UGH!

THUD

OOOOH. ROTTEN KIDS... KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY TABLE!

SHE'S COMPLETELY LOOPY!

SHE SAYS SHE'S BEEN DOWN HERE FOR THREE *YEARS!*

COME ON! COME ON!

CRINK CRINK

THERE!

CREAK

ZIP

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GOLD!

NO! DON'T TOUCH THAT GOLD!

HE'LL BE CURSED! STOP HIM!

CAGLIO! WAIT!

GOLD! GOLD! GOLDEN GOLDILY GOLD!

SHRNK

CLINK CLINK CLINK

GAHAHA! HAHAHAHA!

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SIGH I'M GLASSA. I'M FROM TANCREDI.

DID YOU KNOW TANCREDI MEANS "BURIED TREASURE" IN OLD SURNISH?

I USED TO THINK IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE MINES, BUT NOW I THINK IT'S BECAUSE THERE WAS ALWAYS A TREASURE HERE...A TREASURE BEST LEFT BURIED.

THREE YEARS AGO, MY MINING CREW WAS FOLLOWING A GOLD VEIN DEEP IN THE MOUNTAIN.

IT WAS A WEAK ONE. WE DIDN'T EXPECT TO FIND MUCH. WE CERTAINLY DIDN'T EXPECT TO FIND...

...THE BELL.

OUR PICKS BROKE THROUGH INTO THIS SEALED CHAMBER, AND THERE IT WAS. IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH, BUT WHEN WE RANG IT...

...GOLD COINS STARTED TO POUR OUT OF THE CRACKS IN THE ROCKS. EVERYONE LAUGHED—THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD FOUND THE GREATEST TREASURE IN THE WORLD.

BUT THEN...ONE BY ONE THEY STARTED TO TURN.

ANYONE WHO TOUCHED A SINGLE COIN CHANGED INTO A HIDEOUS, MINDLESS MONSTER, OBSESSED WITH GOLD.

CAGLIO...

NOT A HUGE CHANGE, IN THIS CASE.

HOW COME *YOU* DIDN'T BECOME ONE?

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BECAUSE OF MY SISTER, VERRA.

WE GREW UP LOOKING SO SIMILAR, FOLKS WERE ALWAYS MISTAKING US FOR EACH OTHER. IT DIDN'T BOTHER VERRA—*NOTHING* BOTHERED HER—BUT I COULDN'T *STAND* IT!

SO I ALWAYS TRIED TO BE DIFFERENT FROM HER. IF SHE SAID UP, I SAID DOWN. IF SHE SAID YES, I SAID NO.

WHEN SHE PICKED UP THE GOLD, I SAID I WOULDN'T TOUCH IT. I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO DIDN'T.

BUT YOU COULD GO FOR HELP! YOU—

OH, THEY SENT HELP! THERE WERE RESCUE PARTIES!

AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED? THEY ALL TURNED, TOO!

NOW I'M SCARED TO ASK FOR HELP.

THOSE CREATURES ARE MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, BUT TO ANYONE ELSE, THEY'RE MONSTERS!

SO I STAYED. AND UNTIL **YOU** LOT CAME ALONG, I'D MANAGED TO KEEP THE TREASURE AND THE MONSTERS A SECRET.

I'M NOT LEAVING UNTIL THE CURSE IS BROKEN. UNTIL I BREAK THAT ROTTEN BELL!

WE CAN HELP WITH THAT!

UM...

SNORT I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING! IT'S HARDER THAN DIAMOND!

IF YOU CAN FIND A WAY TO BREAK IT, I SWEAR YOU'LL NEVER WANT FOR FOOD FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES!

DEAL!

YOU GONNA UNTIE ME NOW?

OH, RIGHT!

BRRAAAAAAP!

BYRON, YOU'RE LOOKING BETTER! I WONDER WHAT YOU COULDV'E EATEN.

EVERYTHING! I WAS TRYING TO KEEP YOUR MONSTER CALM.

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE EAT SO MUCH FOOD!

BUT WHERE DID THE FOOD COME FROM?

I'LL TELL YOU— *AFTER* YOU BREAK THE BELL.

THAT'LL BE VERY SOON, THEN, BECAUSE I'LL HAVE THAT BELL BROKEN IN FIVE MINUTES!

THAT I'D LIKE TO SEE! BUT FIRST...

...IF HE'S GONNA RUN LOOSE, HE'LL NEED SOME PROTECTION. FROM THE GOLD, I MEAN.

SO LONG AS IT DOESN'T TOUCH YOUR SKIN, YOU CAN EVEN WALK ON IT.

I KNOW IT'S NOT COMFORTABLE, BYRON, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN BEING TIED UP!

LET'S GO!

KOLYA, WAIT A MINUTE!

UM...SORRY I YELLED AT YOU EARLIER.

IT'S OKAY.

SHRUG

NO, I MEAN...THANKS FOR COMING BACK TO HELP US.

THANKS FOR...BEING A FRIEND!

S-SURE! NO PROBLEM.

WHAT ARE *YOU* LOOKING AT?

SCREEK!

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHY I CAME BACK?

SCRAK!

WHAT ABOUT THE MOLE KING? IS HE CLOSE?

THE "MOLE KING"?

YOU MEAN THE BIG ONE? NAH, WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW.

DON'T GET CLOSE! IT COULD BE A BIG EXPLOSION!

CLEAR YOUR MIND. CLEAR, CLEAR...

HAH!

PUFF

JUST WARMING UP!

SWISH SWISH SWISH

IS IT... WORKING?

HARD TO SAY.

RRRRRRG! I DON'T GET IT!

I DON'T GET WHY IT WORKS SOMETIMES AND OTHERS NOT!

THUMP

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?

MAGIC!

THIS DRAGON TOOTH IS SUPPOSED TO UNLEASH THE POWER WITHIN ME. AND IT *DOES!* BUT...

...I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO BRING IT OUT ON COMMAND.

MAYBE...

MAYBE I COULD HELP.

OH YES!

LAST TIME IT WORKED BECAUSE YOU ANNOYED ME ABOUT SOMETHING.

LET'S TRY THAT AGAIN!

NOT THAT WAY!

I MEAN I COULD HELP YOU COMMAND IT BETTER!

REALLY? YOU KNOW MAGIC?

WHAT? OF COURSE NOT! BUT— LOOK, DO YOU WANT HELP OR NOT?

OKAY, WHAT DO I DO?

CLOSE YOUR EYES. YOU DON'T HAVE TO EMPTY YOUR MIND OR ANYTHING.

YOU'LL HAVE A BUNCH OF THOUGHTS, BUT THERE WILL BE ONE THAT STANDS OUT FROM THE REST—SOMETHING YOU WANT TO ***CHANGE.***

...YES.

TRY TO MAKE THE THOUGHT...GROW BIGGER.

FEED IT ALL THE REASONS YOU CAN THINK OF, UNTIL IT FILLS YOUR MIND COMPLETELY.

LIKE IT'S ALL THAT MATTERS IN THE WORLD.

LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.

AND THEN—

HAAAH—

YAH!

FWSHHH

SHTNK

IT WORKED. IT WORKED!

HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT WOULD WORK?!

UM...

IT DIDN'T WORK.

IT'S STILL IN ONE PIECE.

OH!

MY NECKLACE IS STARTING TO FRAY AGAIN.

BUT THAT WAS A TINY ONE! LET ME TRY AGAIN!

KOLYA, COULD YOU HAND ME THE TWINE FROM MY BAG?

KOLYA?

DODOM

DODOM

DODOM

DODOM

THE CREATURES ARE COMING! STAY AWAY FROM THE TUNNELS!

DODOM DODOM

DODOM DODOM

SCREEK

BLERK

TINKA TINK

SQUAWK

SCREEK

SCREEK

I—I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!

SCREEK!

TAK TAK TAK

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SPLASH
SPLISH
SPLASH
SCREEEK!
GOOD THING THEY HATE WATER.
GLASSA! YOU CAN DO MAGIC, TOO?!
NOT EXACTLY.
THE TREASURE CAVE HAD MORE THAN JUST THE BELL IN IT.
IT HAD THIS STICK, TOO. EVERYWHERE YOU STRIKE IT, THE EARTH CRACKS AND WATER COMES OUT.
AND IT'S NOT...CURSED WATER?
BEEN DRINKING IT FOR THREE YEARS. I'D SAY IT'S SAFE.
BUT LET'S TALK LATER.
WE'D BETTER SCRAM BEFORE THE REST OF—

DODOM DODOM DODOM

DARN IT! TOO LATE!

SCREEK SQUAWK

SCREEK SCREEK

GET READY TO RUN!

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?!

THEY'RE ASSEMBLING!

GSHH

GSHH

THE MOLE KING!

KABOOM

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CRACKA

KATCHINK

WHAT ON EARTH...?

IT'S A CAVE!

A BIG ONE!

OH NO! ANOTHER RESCUE PARTY?!

SHLINK
SHLINK

STOP WHERE YOU ARE! DON'T TOUCH THE GOLD!

WHO'S YELLING?
LOOK! THERE'S SOMEONE ON TOP OF THAT PILE OF—

GOLD.
GOLD!
GOLD!
GOLD!

WE'RE RICH!

RICH!

NOOO! STOP!

KAPOW

PING

YIP!

THERE IT IS!

THERE'S THE MONSTER THAT INJURED ME!

SCREEK.

GRANDMA?!

FWSHH FWSHH

AAAH!!!

GET AWAY!

Y-YOUR HIGHNESS!

DON'T BE DISTRACTED BY THE MONSTER'S MINIONS!

BRING ME FORWARD!

KAPOW

DON'T SHOOT! HE'S NOT A MONSTER!

VIZZ

PING

FWSHH

KAPOW

SCRAK

FWSHH

EEEK

SCREEK

SCREEK

AAAH

SCREEK

SCREEK

THIS IS WHY I SAID WE SHOULD HANG BACK.

KAPOW

SCREEK!

KAPOW

KAPOW

BLAST IT! WE HAVE TO LEAVE UNTIL THIS ALL CALMS DOWN!

TINK

TINK

FWIP

HEY! IT'S THIS WAY!

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WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU STUPID KID?!

SHLINK

SHLINK

SCREEK!

!!!

SHLIIINK

BONK

TINK

NO.
NO...

KLINK

SCRAWK!

SCREEK!

KABOOM

FSHHHHHH

TINKA TINK TINK

RELOAD!

OH, SWEET MOTHER, HELP ME!

IF ANYTHING WILL BREAK THAT BELL, IT'LL BE THAT CANNON!

GO TAKE COVER!

O-OKAY!

YOU THERE! YOU CAN'T—

OUT OF THE WAY, STUFFED SHIRT!

KABOOM

CLONG

IT HIT THE BELL! IT'S...

OOONNNGOOOONNNG

IT'S NOT BROKEN.

GWOOOONNOOOWONG

CRRRR

TINK

TINK

CRRRAAACK

TINKA

TINK

TINK

OW! WHAT'S THIS?

FSSSSHHHHH

SCREEK!!!

GRAAOW!

LEAVE THEM, BYRON!

LET'S GET TO GLASSA!

SQUAWK!

BACK! STAY BACK!

TAK

SPLSH

TAK

TAK

SPLSH

TINKA

TINK

GLASSA!!!

TAKA TAK

BOWOWOW WOWOW!

KATCHINK

CHOMP
CLINK
CLINK

BYRON! NO!

EVERYONE... EVERYONE IS...

GOOOONNNG GOOONNNG

GOOOWOOOOOOONNNNNNG

STOP! STOP RINGING!!!

OONNG
ONNNG

GLASSA'S STICK!

IF IT CAN CRACK ROCK, THEN MAYBE...

OOONNNG
GOOONNG

SHLINK
SHLINK

?!

SCREEK

SCREEK SQUAWK

SCREEK

OH, PLEASE! PLEASE WORK!

I'M SCARED.

PLEASE.

I DON'T WANT TO BE A MOLE LIKE—

OH, POOR BYRON.

I WANT...

I WANT THAT STICK.

YES, TO SAVE BYRON. AND KOLYA.

I *NEED* THAT STICK!

TO SAVE GLASSA. CAGLIO. MYSELF!

I DON'T WANT TO BE A MONSTER!

STICK. IN MY HAND. NOW!

FWWSSSHHH

WAP

GOOOONNGOOO
OOOOOONG
SHLINK
SHLINK

HAYAAH!
CLONG

SPWSH
WOOWOOOONG

WOOOONG

WOOOONG

GRAAACK!

BE QUIET!!!

TONK

SHRACK

EEP!

SPLASH

SPLASH

SPLASH

SPLASH

SPLASH

SPLASH

?!

?

?

?!

HUH?

R-RUMI?

MA?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? IN *THOSE* CLOTHES?!

RUMI!!!

SWEET-HEART!

HONEY!

GRANDPA!

SONNY BOY!

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ARE YOU HURT? I SAW THAT MOLE CREATURE HIT YOU!

NO, I... I THINK I'M OKAY.

SOMETHING IN MY COAT STOPPED THE CLAW.

FLTCH FLTCH

WAS IT THE MOLE KING'S TOOTH I GAVE YOU?! I TOLD YOU IT WAS LUCKY!

UM...

NO. IT WAS MY WEEK-OLD BREAD.

GOLD... GOLD?

WHERE ARE THEY? WHERE ARE THEY?!

COME ON, BYRON. LET'S GET OUT BEFORE THE RESCUE PARTY MISTAKES YOU FOR A MOLE MONSTER!

GOLD... GONE.

OOOH. I'M *STARVING.*

GLASSA SAID WE'D NEVER WANT FOR FOOD AGAIN! I'LL GO FIND HER!

GLASSA! OVER HERE!

OUCH. I'M STIFF ALL OVER.

I DID IT!

I CRACKED THE BELL WITH YOUR DOUSING ROD!

HUH?

IT WAS LIKE YOU SAID—AS SOON AS THE BELL BROKE, THE CURSE WAS LIFTED!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHO ARE YOU?

YOU DON'T REMEMBER US?

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. IS THIS TANCREDI MOUNTAIN?

I GUESS...YOU DON'T REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE?

ABOUT THE FOOD?

FOOD...I'D LOVE SOME FOOD RIGHT NOW. I'M STARVED!

OH... WELL—

VERRA! DON'T JUST STAND THERE—YOU'RE BLOCKING ME!

GLASSA!

ARE THESE ODDBALLS YOUR FRIENDS, GLASS?

TSK SHOULDA GUESSED. YOU ALWAYS GOTTA BE DIFFERENT, HUH?

WAP

I MISSED YOU.

THANK YOU!

OOF!!!

AND I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN MY PROMISE. HERE!

THE STUBBY TABLE?

I SAID THE TREASURE ROOM HAD MORE THAN JUST THE BELL IN IT.

WATCH!

SPIN

SPIN

SPIN

BINK

GROMF
CHOMP
CHOMP
IT MAKES FOOD?! *REAL* FOOD?!
'COURSE IT'S REAL!
HOW DO YOU THINK I LIVED DOWN THERE FOR THREE YEARS?
COME ON, VER, LET'S GO HOME.
HEY, GLASS, WHEN DID YOUR HAIR GET SO LONG?
AH, I'LL TELL YOU LATER. EAT YOUR PIE.
CHOMP I'M BEAT! THINK I'LL TAKE THE DAY OFF.
SNORT THINK I WILL, TOO!
IT'*SH* NOT GOLD BUT PRETTY GOOD TREASURE *SH*TILL! *CHOMP*

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OH, KOLYA! THIS ISN'T A TREASURE WE CAN DIVIDE...

AND WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.

WELL, THERE *IS* SOMETHING YOU COULD GIVE ME—

Y'KNOW, SURI, I BET KOLYA WOULD LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN TO JOIN US ON OUR JOURNEY.

REALLY?!

SIGH ...YEAH.

ARE YOU SURE? IT MIGHT BE PRETTY DANGEROUS.

I'M SURE IT WILL BE, BUT...I'D LIKE TO COME.

I'M SO GLAD!

ALL TOGETHER, WE'LL HAVE NO PROBLEMS NOW!

THEY'RE HEADING NORTH.

ULP!

DON'T WORRY. WE HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO GET THE TWINE BEFORE THEY REACH THE LANDS OF BARON GRIM.

I'M NOT WORRIED.

Suri's story contines in

EXCERPTS FROM SURI'S JOURNAL

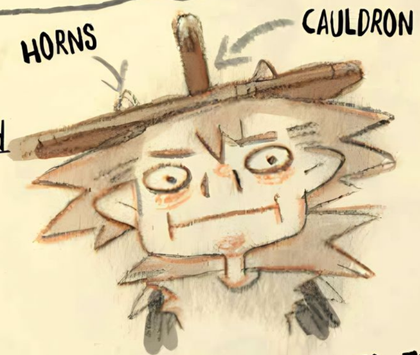
IMPS

TYPE: HUMAN-LIKE (WELL, BABY-LIKE)
DOMAIN: NOT SURE
NATURE: MOSTLY HARMLESS?

I'D NEVER EVEN HEARD OF IMPS BEFORE CAGLIO, SO I GUESS THEY'RE VERY RARE MONSTERS.

CAGLIO (BONE IMP)

DELUDED
CONCEITED
LIES A LOT



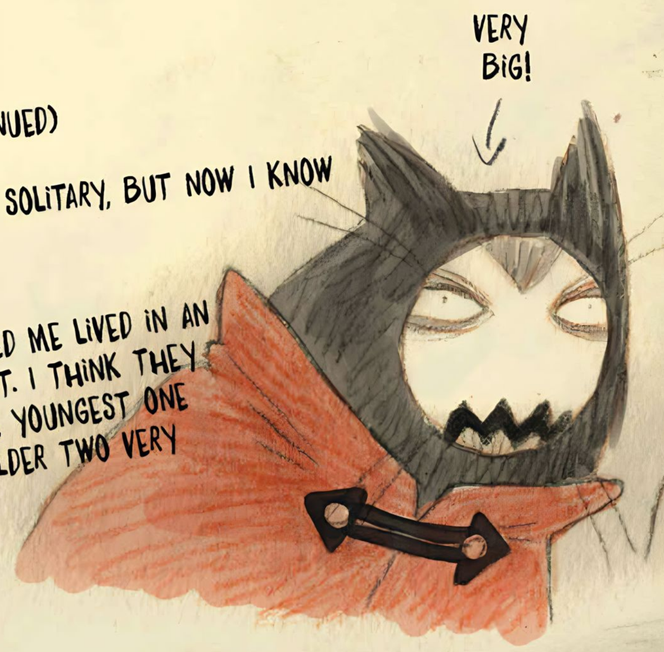
CAGLIO'S A BIT STRANGE—HE'S KIND OF SELF-CENTERED AND LAZY, AND HE REALLY LIKES MONEY AND FOOD.... WELL, MAYBE THOSE PARTS ARE NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM HUMANS. BUT HE SLEEPS IN A CAULDRON AND LIKES FISH FONDUE!

HE IS PRETTY FUNNY AND NICE TO TALK TO, THOUGH! KOLYA SAYS HE'S ONLY OUT FOR HIMSELF, BUT I GET THE IDEA KOLYA DOESN'T LIKE MANY PEOPLE.

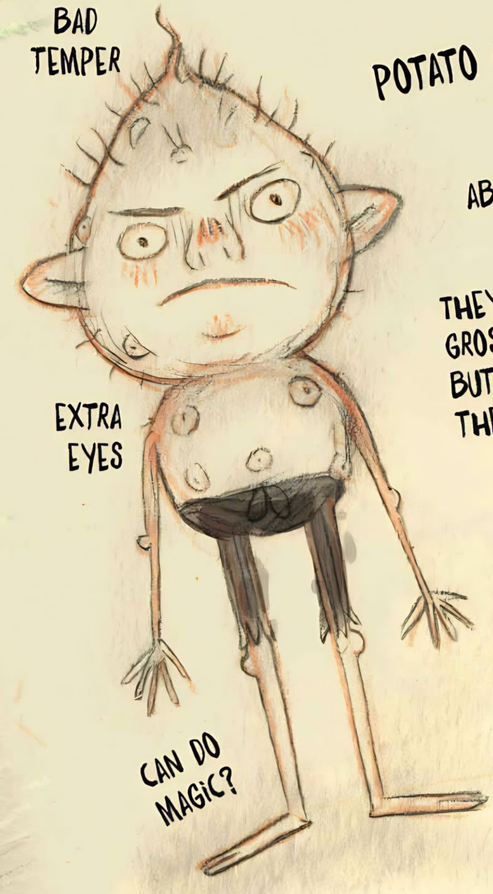
CAITSITH (CONTINUED)

I THOUGHT CAITSITHS WERE SOLITARY, BUT NOW I KNOW THEY CAN LIVE IN GROUPS!

THE THREE THAT ATTACKED ME LIVED IN AN OLD HOUSE IN THE FOREST. I THINK THEY WERE SIBLINGS, BUT THE YOUNGEST ONE DIDN'T LOOK LIKE THE OLDER TWO VERY MUCH. I WONDER WHY...



POTATO IMP



ABOUT 16 INCHES TALL

THEY SPROUT (PULLULATE? UGH, SOUNDS GROSS!) FROM SPOILED OR ROTTEN THINGS, BUT THERE MUST BE MORE TO IT, OTHERWISE THERE WOULD BE LOTS OF THEM AROUND!

LIVES A LONG TIME—AT LEAST 500 YEARS!

I PICKED IT OUT OF BYRON'S TEETH AFTER HE CHEWED ON CAGLIO.

THEY TRIED TO STEAL MY DRAGON'S TOOTH. THIS PROVES IT MUST BE A REALLY POWERFUL AMULET!

WHAT'S STRANGE IS THAT I NEVER TOLD THAT WEIRDO THAT I HAD A DRAGON'S TOOTH. HOW DID THEY FIND OUT?

I SHOULD BE ON MY GUARD FOR OTHER CAITSITHS ON MY JOURNEY.

MOLE KING

TYPE: ANIMAL MONSTER
DOMAIN: UNDERGROUND
NATURE: EVIL

VERY RARE. ONE OF THE OLDEST BREEDS OF MONSTERS. ORIGINS ~~UNKNOWN~~. KNOWN!

A CURSED CRYSTAL BELL WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOLE KING. GLASSA SAID SHE FOUND IT IN A SEALED CHAMBER. I WONDER WHO PUT IT THERE...

ABOUT 15 FEET

MOLE KINGS ARE SECRETIVE AND COVETOUS. THEY RARELY LEAVE THEIR UNDERGROUND LAIRS, WHERE THEY GUARD THEIR TREASURE.

THE MOLE KING'S TREASURE IS A GIGANTIC PILE OF GOLD COINS! THEY DIG IT OUT OF CRACKS WHEN THE BELL RINGS. TOO BAD THE GOLD IS CURSED.

CURSED GOLD

CRAB? OR SPIDER?

I DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT THE COINS, BUT THEY HAD THIS SYMBOL ON THEM.

MOLE CREATURES

THE MOLE KING IS NOT ONE CREATURE, BUT A COLONY OF SMALLER MOLE MONSTERS!

MOLE CREATURES ARE HUMANS THAT HAVE TOUCHED THE CURSED GOLD BROUGHT FORTH BY THE CRYSTAL BELL.

CRYSTAL BELL

CHAMELEON EYES

HUGE CLAWS

IF A MOLE CREATURE SAYS "DIG," YOU MUST ANSWER "DIG DUG" OR THEY'LL ATTACK!

HARD PLATES

HORNS

BYRON

TYPE: ANIMAL MONSTER
DOMAIN: EVERYWHERE!
NATURE: GOOD BOY

A GIANT DOG THAT THINKS HE'S A LITTLE LAP DOG. SWEET AND LOYAL BUT A BIG BABY. LOOKS SCARY AT FIRST, BUT REALLY VERY KIND. CAUTION— MIGHT SMOTHER YOU WITH SNUGGLES!

CAGLIO SAID HE MADE BYRON WITH MAGIC. HE THOUGHT BYRON WOULD MAKE HIS FORTUNE. I THINK CAGLIO'S IDEAS NEED SOME WORK.

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Published by First Second
First Second is an imprint of Roaring Brook Press,
a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings Limited Partnership
120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271
firstsecondbooks.com
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Library of Congress Control Number: 2022920053

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FIRST EDITION

First edition, 2023
Edited by Mark Siegel and Robyn Chapman
Cover design by Kirk Benshoff and Yan L. Moy
Interior book design by Molly Johanson and Yan L. Moy
Production editing by Sarah Gompper

Penciled with Prismacolor Col-Erase in terra cotta and black. Inked with
Prismacolor Premier fine line marker in black. Colored digitally with Photoshop.

ISBN 978-1-250-62538-0 (paperback)
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 978-1-250-62537-3 (hardcover)
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 978-1-250-33608-8 (ebook)

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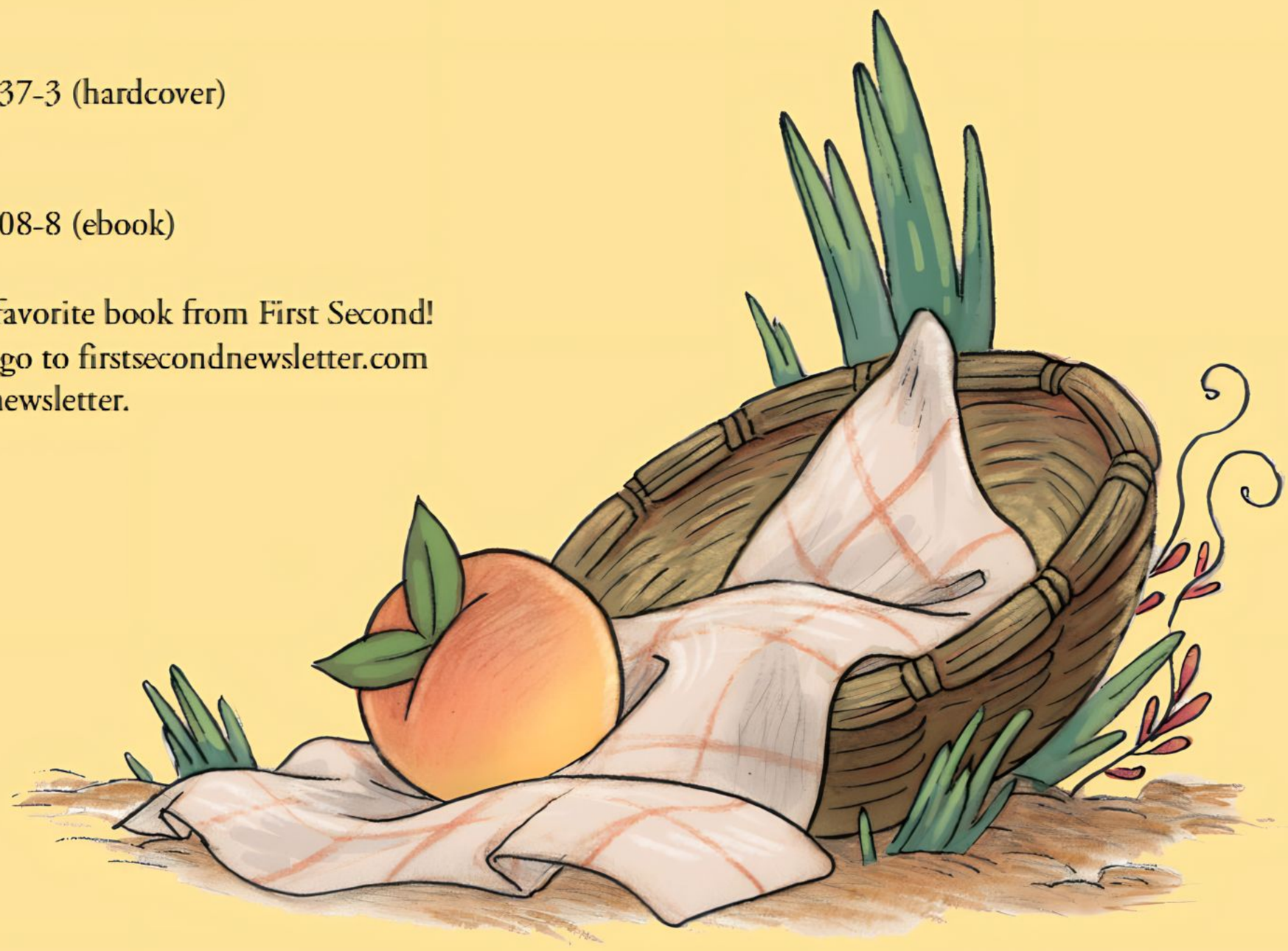

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